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THE

HIGHLAND CASTLE,

AND THE

LOWLAND COTTAGE.

A Novel.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

BY

ROSALIA ST. CLAIR,

AUTHOR OF THE SON OF O'DONNEL, BLIND BEGGAR, &c. &c.

Like April-morning clouds, that pass,
With varying shadow, o'er the grass,
And imitate, on field and furrow,
Life's chequer'd scene of joy and sorrow.
WALTER SCOTT.

VOL. I.

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1820.

LIBRARY

THE

HIGHLAND CASTLE.

CHAPTER I.

He took her in his arms:—the bairnie smil'd
Wi' sic a look, wad made a savage mild.

Gentle Shepherd.

.....

The tear down childhood's cheek that flows
Is like the dewdrop on the rose;
When next the summer-breeze comes by,
And waves the bush, the flower is dry.
Won by their care, the lovely child
Soon on her new protectors smil'd. SCOTT.

TOWARDS the close of a serene autumn-day, Margaret Saunderson lighted the fire in the parlour of Glencross Cottage, placed her master's slippers on the hearth, and the tea-tray on the table;

after which she proceeded to the bank-head, to take a view of the road leading to Edinburgh.

Those she looked for, however, appeared not, and she returned to the house. Another hour elapsed. Margaret again rose from her wheel, stirred the parlour-fire, placed two massive silver candlesticks on the table, and once more proceeded to the door. The night, however, had set in with more than usual darkness; and no sound met her ear, save the cheerful notes of Jenny, as she returned from the loan, lilting "The Broom o' the Cowden Knows."

"Wow, lass, but it be a mirk night," said the old dame, as she followed Jenny to the milk-house, to inspect the bowies and milsie; "I hope our fowk will get safe hame!"

"What's to hinder them, aunt?" said the light-hearted damsel.

"What's to hinder them!" repeated the aunt. "Ah, hinny! hinny! canna he

he who dwells aboon a' do what he pleases wi' us sinfu' creatures? He gi'e us life, and he can tak' it awa' in the twinklin' of an ee: there is but ae way of coming into the warld, but there's a million of gawn out o' it. If the appointed time be cum, he can commission——"

Here the good dame's harangue was stopt short by Bawty pricking up his ears, and inviting her to follow him to the door, while a whelp left off tugging at the corner of the milsie clout, and ran brattling up and down the entry, barking with all his might.

"The plague tak' the beast!" said Margaret; "it's enough to deave ane. I'se warrant it's our fowk cumin' up the lane. Hae done, Jenny, and gi'e me the candle."

Margaret shaded the candle with the corner of her apron to prevent its being blown out by the wind, and went to the door, preceded by her canine companions,

and followed by two favourite cats, who never failed to welcome the return of their master.

This time she listened not in vain; for the cheerful neighing of Mallie, as she contemplated her snug stable and well-stored manger, proclaimed the near approach of the master of the mansion.

"I'm glad ye're cum, sir," said the old woman. "But whare's John? Jenny, lassie, cum and tak' the horse."

"He will be here presently," replied her master; "and we have brought you a present, my old friend."

These words were scarcely uttered, when John rode up, and carefully handed down what appeared a large bundle, wrapt up in an old tartan plaid, and afterwards alighted with a small wicker basket in his hand.

The good dame followed her master into the parlour with no little curiosity; but her curiosity was converted into the utmost astonishment, when, on the bundle

bundle being opened, she beheld a sleeping infant, about three years old.

"His presence be about us, sir!" said the old woman. "Whar' cam' ye by this little innocent?"

"John will tell you all about it by-and-by, Mrs. Saunderson," said her master; "and I beg you will provide every thing proper for the little stranger; and be particular in taking care of a kitten contained in that basket."

Margaret, whose curiosity did not supersede her care for her master, gave the sleeping child to her niece, and bustled to prepare tea, while John was busy in the stable.

The honourable Mr. Ferguson was one of the chief ornaments of the Scottish bar. Sprung from the younger branch of a noble, though not opulent family, he had from his cradle been destined to the profession of the law. He received the first rudiments of his education at the high school of Edinburgh,

and afterwards completed his studies at the celebrated university of that city. Unlike many young men of rank, who too often waste their youth in frivolous pursuits, detrimental to their own interest, and unprofitable to society, young Ferguson was, on the contrary, indefatigable in the acquisition of knowledge. Nor did he confine his studies exclusively to those subjects more strictly connected with his future profession. General political science, statistical and financial investigations, the internal and external relations of Great Britain, by turns engaged his attention. His taste and judgment in the fine arts were striking and correct; and although no musician, he possessed all that warm enthusiasm for music, especially the vocal music of his native Scotland, so characteristic of his countrymen.

At the age of twenty-one he was admitted an advocate; and never did the young aspirant for legal fame bring to the

the bar a sounder judgment, a more classical taste, or comprehensive genius. His eloquence was natural and energetic. There was a harmony in the tone and modulation of his voice which arrested the attention of his hearers, and delighted all those who listened to him. His manner corresponded to his voice, and both united, contributed like a charm to make his eloquence irresistible. His comprehensive mind embraced intuitively whatever was important in any cause in which he was engaged; and his talent for discrimination was such, that he at once seized the essential circumstances, and rejected whatever was futile and insignificant.

Convinced that civil law is, in almost every point, founded on right reason and good sense, he never descended to legal quirks, or meretricious appeals to the passion of the judges, to attain an object: hence he was at all times listened

to with respect and attention by the bench. But, as severity, approaching to barbarity, marked, in his opinion, the criminal code of Britain, he was less scrupulous in the means he employed to rescue a miserable criminal from the jaws of death. On such occasions, all that ingenuity could devise, or the most moving eloquence effect, were exerted by him to induce a jury to lean towards the side of mercy. Nor did his exertions terminate with the acquittal of the culprit. The walls of many a prison, in the course of the circuits, can bear witness to the indefatigable zeal with which he laboured to correct crime, and turn the sinner from the evil of his ways. Acquainted, however, with the wants and feelings of his kind, he was aware, that to turn an individual loose upon society, with a ruined character, and no means of exerting industry or procuring subsistence, was only a mock-

ery

ery of humanity, and calculated
render the latter end of that bei
even worse than the beginning. I
purse, therefore, and his interest, we
never withheld, to place beyond t
reach of future temptation the u
fortunate wretch whom his eloquen
had saved from an untimely end. If
sometimes failed in his benevolent i
tentions, and beheld inveterate hab
prevail over his best-laid plans for t
reformation of the criminal, he had al
the heartfelt satisfaction of knowi
that they frequently succeeded beyo
his most sanguine hopes.

In private life, his language, his ma
ners, and his sentiments, were peculiar
those of a gentleman. No one possesse
the powers of wit and humour in a high
degree; but both were tempered wi
judgment and good-nature. His ende
vour was always to please, never to c
fend. His conversation was enriche
with apt and happy illustrations of t

various topics in discussion; and whether these were gay or serious, he always proved an instructive and entertaining companion. But above all, the qualities of his heart shone conspicuous in his actions. His benevolence was warm and extensive—neither cramped by systems, nor narrowed by those partialities which too often influence even the best men. Whenever he embarked in any scheme calculated to promote the happiness of meritorious individuals, no honourable exertion was spared by him to secure the object he had in view.

He was about the middle size, with a form equally calculated for feats of strength or agility. His features were regular, and his dark hazel eyes bright and penetrating. There was a soothing gentleness in his language, when addressing his inferiors, that made him an universal favourite with his domestics and immediate dependents.

In early youth, even before he had terminated

terminated his academical studies, he became warmly attached to the daughter of an old friend of his mother's, who felt for him an equal regard. Robbed, however, of the object of his warmest affection by the inexorable hand of death, Mr. Ferguson sought, in professional studies, in the cultivation of literature, in the charms of friendship, and the exercise of benevolence, consolation for the disappointment of his dearly-cherished hopes.

Mrs. Saunderson had been the favourite attendant of his mother, and at her death removed to Glencross Cottage to superintend the household of her son. The old dame regarded her master with the most affectionate veneration, and was by him treated rather as a friend than a domestic.

This favourite residence of our worthy advocate, which he purchased a few years after the commencement of his legal career, was situated near the source

of Glencross Water, rendered celebrated from being the scene of the popular pastoral of the "Gentle Shepherd."

Here it was that, unencumbered by pomp and ceremony, he spent most of his leisure hours. Frequently his retirement was enlivened by the presence of his most intimate and valued friends; but the doors of Glencross Cottage were rigorously barred against those insipid and every-day acquaintances who make such a large demand on the time and patience of every public character.

Mr. Ferguson had just returned from the northern circuit, and finding he had a few weeks to spare before the meeting of the Court of Session, mounted his faithful Mallie, and, attended by honest John Brown, proceeded on his way to his romantic cottage.

Scarcely had they passed the West Port, before their ears were assailed by the most piteous screams from an infant voice, which appeared to issue from a miserable

miserable mud cottage, at a short distance from the public road.

Mr. Ferguson touched Mallie's side with the spur, the high-mettled animal instantly cleared the hedge and ditch, and in a few seconds reached the door of the hovel. He sprung from the saddle, and opening the latch, presented himself before the startled cotter. In an authoritative voice he inquired if she was the mother of the child, or what offence the infant had committed to demand such a cruel chastisement?

In an unsteady voice, the woman informed Mr. Ferguson that Mary was a parish nursling, and that she had given her a beating for bestowing part of her dinner on a half-starved kitten, which the child, now freed from the grasp of the rustic virago, fondled in her bosom, sobbing—"Poor pussey!"

Mr. Ferguson placed the child on one knee, and poor pussey on the other; and having succeeded in soothing her terrors,

rors, he thought he had never in his life beheld a more interesting little creature.

John had by this time reached the scene of action by a safer and more circuitous road than that taken by his master, and was sent by him to the manse to request the presence of the minister for a few minutes.

In about half an hour John returned, accompanied by the reverend Mr. Monteith, who was informed by Ferguson of the brutality he had witnessed, and his intention of adopting the poor persecuted girl.

The reverend gentleman expressed the greatest satisfaction at this determination, and proceeded to narrate all that he knew of poor little Mary's story :—

"When the infant," he proceeded to say, "was apparently about six weeks old, she was brought in a postchaise to the cottage of Elspeth Anderson, by a gentleman in the undress of an officer. The worthy old woman reared the infant

fant with the greatest tenderness, but never divulged to any one the secret of her birth or connexions. Not more than five months ago," continued Mr. Monteith, "the cottage of the gudewife was burnt to the ground, and herself and the infant were with the utmost difficulty rescued from the flames. Elspeth Anderson never recovered from the fright, and a few hours before her death sent to request that I would visit her. Unfortunately I was from home when the message arrived at the manse: the moment I returned, however, I hastened to the poor sufferer, but though in possession of her senses, she was nearly speechless. Fixing her eyes wistfully on my face, she pointed to Mary, and with difficulty uttered—'The box—the certificate of her birth,' and expired.

"Though burdened by a numerous family," continued the divine, with a deep sigh, "my first impulse was to adopt the poor friendless orphan; but I was

was overruled in my intention, and Mary was placed by the parish under the care of this disgrace to her sex. I caused the strictest search to be made among the rubbish of the cottage, but no vestige of the box could be found. This locket was the only article that can, with any shew of probability, be supposed to appertain to Mary; and I have carefully preserved it, in the hope that it might one day enable her parents to identify their lost child."

Mr. Monteith presented the trinket to his auditor; and they proceeded to wrap up the child, and place her on the horse before John. But though rejoiced to leave her cross nurse, her little heart heaved with grief, and her lip quivered, at the idea of parting with the four-footed companion of her sufferings.

Mr. Ferguson witnessed the affectionate struggle in the bosom of his adopted child, and purchased the miserable looking kitten, and a wicker basket in which

to

to carry it home from the cruel owner of the cottage.

Mary was now half wild with joy; she laughed and chattered to old John, till, fairly overpowered with sleep, she lay for the remainder of the way motionless in his arms.

John had scarcely finished the narration of the day's adventure to his wondering hearers, when Mary opened her eyes, and fixed them, with a smile, on the face of Mrs. Saunderson, in whose arms she reclined.

"My bonny bairn," said the old woman, kissing her, "it was e'en a sin to be ill t'ye; and am sure nae muckle gude wul e'er cum owre her, be she wha she wul."

Mary and the starved kitten now got a plentiful supper of bread and milk; and being placed for the present on a *shake-down*, at the old woman's bedside, the little stranger soon sunk into a profound

found sleep, with her favourite kitten closely hugged in her arms.

The slumbers of our benevolent advocate were calm and undisturbed as those of the innocent being he had taken under his protection.

The first object which struck his eyes on coming down to breakfast the following morning, was the little stranger gambolling on the lawn with Bawty and the kitten. For a moment he stood to contemplate the happiness he had conferred, and then opening the glass-door leading from the parlour, he called to Mary, who came running towards him with all her might, and poor pussey in her arms.

If the evening before he had been interested by the affectionate disposition and forlorn situation of the deserted child, he was now fascinated with her infant graces. She still wore the coarse stuff parish dress; but Margaret had caused

caused it to be washed while Mary slept. Her matted locks were nicely combed, and clustered in shining curls round her neck and forehead.

The cruel usage she had undergone for some time past had rendered her timid, but an encouraging look or smile called forth all her natural and childish vivacity.

On first entering the parlour, she hung down her head, but on Mr. Ferguson saying—"Come hither, my dear girl; come and shake hands with me," she raised her laughing sunburnt face, and gave him such a look with her large dark eyes as quite captivated the worthy advocate.

"Poor deserted innocent!" he exclaimed aloud, "never shalt thou be destitute of a home while I possess one. Untoward indeed must have been the lot of thy parents, which compelled them to relinquish a treasure so precious."

When

When Mr. Ferguson first rescued this infant from the grasp of her cruel nurse, it was his intention to bestow on her such a plain education as would enable her to make her way in the world by her own industry. The infantile graces and endowments of the poor deserted Mary, however, daily endeared her more and more to her liberal-minded benefactor; and before she had been three months an inmate of Glencross Cottage, he formed the resolution of adopting and educating her as his own child.

The kindness with which she was treated by every inmate of this hospitable dwelling produced the happiest effect on her temper and disposition; and she returned their affection with a large share of love and obedience.

CHAPTER II.

——— A moment o'er his face,
A tablet of unutterable thoughts
Was trac'd—and then it faded as it came.

BYRON.

ON a cold winter evening in January, about four months after Mary was taken under the protection of Mr. Ferguson, the worthy lawyer had seated himself at the tea-table, with the brief of a client in his hand. So intent was he on the perusal of the paper, that the hissing tea-urn and hot toast remained for a long time unnoticed.

Mary, who was seated on a little foot-stool, fondling poor pussey, overpowered by sleep, had sunk down on the carpet, and laid her downy cheek on honest Bawty, who lay stretched at his master's feet, while

while her little arm encircled her favourite kitten.

The ringing of the gate-bell and the trampling of horses announced visitors, and roused Mr. Ferguson from his studies. The next moment the parlour-door opened, and a tall thin man, apparently about thirty, entered the room. His complexion was fair and ruddy; his features, though somewhat too broad, were on the whole handsome, and his full dark blue eyes sparkled with great brilliancy: yet there was an expression of shrewd cunning in his face, and a haughtiness in his air and manner, which repelled confidence, and chilled affection.

"Welcome, sir Simon!" said the lawyer, advancing, and extending his hand to the stranger; "but doubly welcome would you have been, had you brought Marion with you. Pray how is my sister?"

"Essaying all her powers to rear our puny

pany boy," replied the baronet: "but I would advise her to take a lesson from her more expert brother; for this fair rose you have transplanted to the shades of Glencross," glancing his keen eye on the sleeping child, "affords a favourable specimen of your nursery talents.'

This speech was accompanied with a smile he meant to be facetious, but which covered the most bitter irony.

Awakened by his entrance, the gentle, the timid Mary, shrunk from his regards, occasionally peeping from behind her benefactor's chair, where she had taken refuge, to steal a look at the intruder.

Lured from her hiding-place by the kind voice of her patron, the stranger, for the first time, obtained a full view of her animated countenance. The moment he fixed his eyes upon the lovely infant, an undefinable expression marked his features; and it was only by a strong effort that he could suppress the inward agitation of his mind.

Sir

Sir Simon Frazer was the only son of a baronet of ancient family and immense wealth in Argyleshire. He was educated in the paternal mansion, under the eye of a parent whose chief failing was that of family pride, which had been handed down to him through a succession of generations.

This habitual feeling of self-exaltation, from the mere adventitious circumstance of birth, unconnected with individual talent or moral worth, tended to narrow his mind, and render him insensible to merit, except in a certain rank of life. Wrapt up in his own consequence, he was supercilious to his inferiors, distant to his equals; and never, in his own opinion, did sir William Frazer stand in the presence of a superior. Yet the honour of sir William was unimpeachable; and though haughty in his manners, he was in fact a liberal master.

In early life he had married his own cousin,

cousin, the honourable Miss Frazer, who from infancy had been regarded as his destined bride. For five years they lived in a state of the most perfect harmony. The mild gentle manners of lady Frazer would probably in time have corrected whatever was harsh or forbidding in the character of her husband; but her life fell a sacrifice in giving birth to a daughter, when her son, the present sir Simon, was only two years of age.

The death of this amiable woman proved an incalculable loss to her infant children. Sir William from that period continued wrapt up in the most impenetrable gloom, while a maiden sister ruled in his establishment with uncontrolled sway.

With all her brother's pride of ancestry, Miss Janet Frazer possessed not one of his virtues. Ignorant, tyrannical, and vindictive, her only pleasure seemed to consist in marring the happiness of

others. Her nephew was the pride of her heart—not from affection, but because he was the future representative of the ancient house of Frazer, of that ilk. Uncontrolled in his actions, and gratified by his weak and ignorant aunt in his most unreasonable wishes, young Frazer was a despot even in petticoats; and as he approached adolescence, his actions, nay even his pleasures, assumed a selfish character.

While his mind was thus suffered to run wild, or rather to be choked up with the most noxious weeds, his frame was evolved and strengthened by constant exercise in the open air. Bitter indeed must have been the blast that would have prevented the young laird from pursuing the deer on his native mountains, or rowing in his boat on Loch Awe, or Loch Fyne, in search of the delicious fish with which they abound.

At the age of eight, a tutor had been provided,

provided, as a matter of course. The reverend Mr. M'Gregor was a man possessed of solid learning and an amiable disposition, but wanted that decision of character necessary to obtain a salutary control over his pupil. Hence the progress of Simon in letters was slow and imperfect; and when at the age of eighteen his father died, he was extremely deficient in every species of learning requisite for a gentleman.

Left under the guardianship of his maternal uncle, sir Simon Frazer was sent by him to Edinburgh to complete his studies; but though emulation spurred him forward in a certain degree, he terminated his academical career without either honour or profit to himself; and as soon as twenty-one freed him from the control of his worthy uncle, he hurried back to his native wilds, to recommence the life of a fisher and hunter.

Very different was his lovely sister.

Neglected and tyrannized over by aunt Janet, she found a friend and instructor in Mr. M'Gregor, who, delighted with the gentleness and docility of the neglected child, took the utmost pleasure in imparting to her every species of learning with which he was himself acquainted, classical knowledge excepted; for he, good man, would have deemed that hallowed field of literature profaned by female approach.

Though destitute of many of those accomplishments befitting her sex and rank in life, her uncle was pleased to observe the progress she had made in several branches of useful knowledge, and with such a solid foundation, predicted that her future improvement would be an easy task.

At the period her brother was sent to Edinburgh, Miss Frazer was also placed at a seminary in that city. Here, freed from the tyranny of her aunt, and treated with the most encouraging tender-

ness

ness by the respectable Mrs. Fogo, she might be said first to have enjoyed existence.

Among her youthful associates, Marion Ferguson was selected as her chosen companion. This amiable girl, pitying the rustic backwardness of her friend, did all in her power to screen her from the tittering ridicule of many a pert Miss, who was her inferior in every thing save an acquaintance with some of the absurd modes and usages of fashionable life. She also took every opportunity of drawing forth the intrinsic virtues and talents of her friend, and placing them in a conspicuous point of view.

Helen Frazer, on her part, felt the warmest gratitude for this kindness, and a friendship thus sprung up between them, which only terminated with the death of the ill-fated Helen.

During the six years she remained at school, Miss Frazer spent her vacations

at the elegant mansion of her guardian, lord William Frazer, about ten miles from Edinburgh.

At this period her uncle had been many years a widower, and his only tie to life appeared to be the orphan children of his deceased sister, and an only son, who was in Ireland with his regiment, and whom, consequently, Helen had not yet seen.

During the period of her fifth Christmas vacation, while presiding at breakfast, a letter was delivered to her uncle, which he hastily glanced over, exclaiming—"Thank God! in another week I shall embrace my Charles."

Helen sincerely participated in the joy of her uncle, and longed with almost equal impatience for the arrival of her much-vaunted cousin.

It was a clear frosty evening in January, when the trampling of horses drew lord William Frazer and his niece to the hall; and in a few minutes afterwards

wards an elegant youth galloped up to the door, threw himself from the saddle, and rushed into the extended arms of his father.

The mutual joy of their meeting having somewhat subsided, the cousins were introduced to each other, and the evening was spent in all the harmony of the purest friendship.

Charles was exhausted by a long and rapid day's journey, and complaining of fatigue, retired early to his chamber.

On the following morning his anxious father was alarmed by the alteration in the appearance of his beloved Charles. In place of the animated vivacious youth he had parted with three years before, he now beheld him thin, languid, and dejected. An air of sadness had taken habitual possession of his features, which at times amounted even to gloom. But he persisted in affirming that he was in a state of perfect health.

Observing that every allusion to the melancholy which oppressed him was evidently painful, lord William desisted from noticing it farther, and, with the concurrence of his niece, endeavoured, by every means in his power, to withdraw his mind from dwelling on the cause of his dejection, whatever it might be. With this view Marion Ferguson was invited to spend some time with her friend; and sir Simon Frazer was also summoned from the north, in order to be introduced to his cousin. Excursions were daily planned to explore the romantic and classical environs of Edinburgh. In all these little parties Charles made one, but the animating spirit was wanting, and a prophet might have struck the rock in vain.

His leave of absence, which was only for a month, had nearly expired, and he talked of rejoining his regiment on the following week, when one morning, after

after breakfast, he requested his cousin, in a whisper, to join him in a solitary ramble.

Ever prone to oblige, Helen immediately prepared to accompany him; and having taken their way to an impervious wood, about a mile from her uncle's mansion, the cousins entered a solitary path, and soon lost sight of every human habitation.

What the nature of their conference might be remained a secret; but from that fatal morning, the health and spirits of Helen gradually declined.

Charles set off on the following week for the head-quarters of his corps, in Carlisle, where they scarcely remained six months, being ordered to the Continent at the breaking out of the French revolution.

On the evening of the day previous to the march of his corps, Charles arrived at his father's house in Edinburgh,

worn out with fatigue, which he imputed to the rapidity of his journey.

He expressed such lively uneasiness on being informed of his cousin's illness and her return to the Highlands, that his anxious parent would have flattered himself his melancholy proceeded from a growing passion for that amiable girl, had he not been well assured that the depression of his spirits commenced at a period prior to his introduction to Miss Frazer.

Sir Simon Frazer was, at this time, on a visit to Glencross Cottage, and Charles expressed an ardent desire to bid him adieu before leaving Edinburgh. Lord William was surprised at this wish, as the two cousins were completely dissimilar in character and disposition. Nevertheless he dispatched a servant, to request the presence of his nephew in the morning.

Sir Simon reached Edinburgh at an early

early hour; and Charles, who was evidently on the watch for his appearance, remained with him in private for more than an hour, after which they returned to the breakfast-parlour; and the day was passed in greater cheerfulness than could have been anticipated.

After taking a mournful leave of his beloved parent, captain Frazer threw himself into the York mail at twelve o'clock at night, in order to meet his company, which was to halt at that city.

CHAPTER III.

" In vain from fate we strive to fly,
For first or last, as all must die,
So 'tis decreed, by those above,
That first or last we all must love."

.....

" Hail, awful scenes! hail, views sublime!
Where grandeur sits on lofty throne,
Looking contempt on space and time,
Calling the dizzy steeps her own."

THE fascinating graces and winning manners of Marion Ferguson had found their way to the hitherto insensible heart of sir Simon Frazer, during his former visit to his uncle.

At twenty-one this enchanting girl was equally distinguished by her personal graces as by a highly-cultivated mind. Good sense, politeness, affability, and good-humour, were characteristic

tic of her disposition; and these native virtues and perfections had been drawn forth and received the highest degree of lustre from a careful and judicious education.

Having lost both her parents at a very early age, she had, from that period, been the peculiar care of her brother, who was several years her senior, and under whose hospitable roof she had spent her infant years. When at a proper age, she was placed by him under the care of Mrs. Fogo, whose affectionate and unremitting attentions left her darling pupil little to regret in the loss of parents she was unable to recollect.

Her attachment to Helen Frazer predisposed her to receive the brother of her friend with favourable eyes. Sir Simon Frazer was tall, and, at this period, not inelegant in his person. His manners, when he had a purpose to effect, were engaging, and he was commonly called a polite and accomplished man: yet his understanding

understanding was, in reality, below mediocrity, and his knowledge of that superficial kind which is acquired, without study, by a general intercourse with mankind.

His suit to the fair Marion was not long preferred in vain. Her heart was unengaged, and, new to the world, he was the first who had seriously offered incense at the shrine of the youthful beauty.

Her preference once acknowledged, sir Simon lost no time in applying to Mr. Ferguson for his consent to their union. The worthy advocate could have wished that his sister had been less hasty in fixing her regards; but as it was, he rejoiced that her affection had been bestowed on one whose character and rank in life were unexceptionable.

Helen Frazer rejoiced to receive a sister in her dearest friend; yet she trembled for the future happiness of the warm-hearted Marion, when she took a retro-

a retrospective glance at the stern and rugged stamina of her brother's mind. —"Yet beauty and sweetness, such as those possessed by my friend," thought the inexperienced girl, "must soften the hardest nature;" and, led on by delusive hope, she began to sketch, in her imagination, future scenes of domestic enjoyment, in which, however, her cousin Charles formed the principal figure in the picture.

The confidence reposed in her by this highly-prized youth transformed, however, the smiling landscape of her fancy into a dreary waste, and planted a thorn in the gentle bosom of Helen, which blighted the fair prospects of her youth.

A few weeks after the departure of Charles to join his regiment at Carlisle, Helen accompanied her brother to the north, to assist with her taste in preparing the old family mansion of the Frazers for the reception of its new mistress.

The

The languor and melancholy which she had in some measure repressed in the presence of her uncle and her friend, she now indulged in without control; and in a few weeks her health began to yield to the unavailing regrets which constantly preyed on her spirits.

Removed from the immediate sphere of Miss Ferguson's attractions, her brother reverted, with increased zest, to those coarse and boisterous pleasures which had been habitual to him from his infancy.

Helen, thus left to brood over her sorrows, with no companion but her austere and disagreeable aunt Janet, saw the period approach which was to re-unite her to her early friend, with a degree of apathy which a few months before she would have deemed impossible.

Another source of anxiety proceeded from the silence of Charles. Day after day fled away, but the promised communication arrived not; and she heard, with

with dismay, that he had actually embarked for the Continent, without affording her that information which alone could enable her to fulfil the solemn promise he had exacted from her during their confidential interview.

Conjecture was baffled in accounting for this silence: sometimes she dreaded the important packet might have miscarried, in which case the mischief might prove incalculable, should it fall into improper hands. Sometimes she resolved to write to the Continent; but our armies not being stationary, she doubted whether a letter would reach him in safety.

In this fluctuating and uneasy state she beheld the approach of May, which was to witness the union of her only brother with the dearest friend of her heart. She had promised to accompany sir Simon to Glencross Cottage, but increasing debility, both of mind and body, rendered her unfit for so long a journey,

part

part of which must necessarily be performed on horseback.

Loaded with her warmest wishes for his happiness, and charged with a packet to her friend, the baronet commenced his journey; but, wrapt up in the selfish contemplation of anticipated enjoyment, he breathed not a sigh, he bestowed not a thought on the faded form and sunken spirits of his only sister.

The journey was performed with the greatest rapidity, and a week before the appointed day of his return, the impatient bridegroom arrived at Glencross Cottage. Above disguise, the lovely bride displayed the sincere joy she felt at the unexpected appearance of her lover, though a ray of sadness overspread her countenance, and a starting tear dimmed the lustre of her eye, on learning that illness had deprived her of the pleasure of her friend's company on this important occasion.

The

The affair of settlements was soon adjusted; and early in June the union of the lovers took place, under circumstances which afforded a fair promise of complete and lasting happiness.

But short-sighted at best are the views of mortals—too frequently does the shadowy phantom of happiness elude their grasp, and leave behind only sorrow and disappointment! So it was with the luckless lady Frazer; for soon was the gay, the smiling, the obsequious lover, metamorphosed into the indifferent, the dull, and the morose husband; and all her dreams of connubial happiness vanished with the unsubstantial gaieties of the nuptial pageantry.

Immediately after the ceremony, the new-married couple relinquished the solitude of Glencross Cottage for the gaities of Edinburgh. The first three months were spent by sir Simon in a round of visits, and in exhibiting his lovely wife at all the public places which were

were accessible at this season of the year; and the general admiration which everywhere followed her steps, for a time, by flattering the vanity of her husband, threw a veil over the natural deformity of his character. But the incense offered at the shrine of lady Frazer's beauty and accomplishments soon became tiresome and even unpleasing to sir Simon, and he longed to return to the gross pleasures in which he indulged in the country.

In the beginning of October, lady Frazer, after taking an affectionate leave of her brother and lord William Frazer, prepared to accompany her husband to his paternal home.

What tended to reconcile the already neglected wife to this arrangement was the prospect of once again embracing her chosen friend, who still continued in a declining state of health.

During the first part of their journey, the baronet scarcely maintained even an appearance

appearance of civility; but as they entered the Highlands, the gloom which hung on his brow began to disperse, and with something like his former vivacity he welcomed his dispirited companion to the land of his fathers.

Lady Frazer endeavoured, by assuming an air of satisfaction which she was far from feeling, to retain some portion of the regard of the man to whom she had devoted her life. She therefore listened with seeming pleasure, though with a bleeding heart, to the description he gave of the mode of life among his hardy countrymen, or their manner of pursuing the deer in his native mountains, a subject on which he was never weary of dilating.

It was evening, when crossing the Luss, they entered the pleasant village of that name. The inn (if it deserves to be so called) at which our travellers alighted was mean, and ill-provided with those comforts and conveniences

to

to which the Lowland gentry are accustomed; but with that good-humour which uniformly distinguished the conduct of lady Frazer, she expressed to the landlady her perfect satisfaction with the attention she received.

The beauty of the following morning tempted sir Simon to recommence his journey at an early hour. Lady Frazer was an admirer of nature in her boldest and most sublime aspect; and sad and gloomy as were the presages of the future which flitted before her mind's eye, she yet could not gaze with indifference on the fine expanse of Loch Lomond, with its numerous islands, gilded by a brilliant autumn sun, or contemplate the superb views and varied scenery stretched around, with Ben Lomond rearing its majestic head in the distance, without the most enthusiastic feelings of awe and delight. She turned to her companion, but no corresponding feeling illuminated his features. Pertinacious,

nacious, however, in deceiving herself in regard to the character of the man with whom she was to tread life's weary round—"Those views have been familiar to him from infancy," thought she, "and cannot excite the same feelings as when seen for the first time. Yet could scenes like these ever be regarded by me with apathy?" she concluded, with a sigh.

"You will behold a finer sight, if we ascend to the top of Ben Lomond," said sir Simon; and, unwilling to check any appearance of cordiality in her husband, lady Frazer expressed the gratification it would afford her to explore that celebrated mountain.

With this intention the baronet stopped at the house of a friend, a few miles from Luss. All the family were in Edinburgh, except the widowed mother of the laird, who received them with all the characteristic hospitality of her country.

Informed

Informed of their intention, a boat was ordered to be got in readiness the following morning, which the kindness of the old lady took care should be well stored with cold provisions, and plenty of excellent wine.

At an early hour they were launched on the bosom of the loch, and quickly rowed to the opposite shore. The distance from the water's edge to the summit of the mountain is computed, as their guide informed them, to be fully six miles of continued ascent.

At the termination, however, of rather more than four hours, sir Simon and his fair companion reached the goal of their wishes; and the prospect which now burst on the astonished lady Frazer more than compensated for the fatigue she had undergone. At their feet reposed the loch, now apparently diminished to a small pool, while the eye wandered over the towns and villages of the county of Lanark, till it rested on Tinto, towering

towering above them. Northward the prospect is awful and sublime. Mountains, only inferior in height to Ben Lomond, erect their unequal summits, amid which the sparkling waters of Loch Katerine and Monteith expand over the contracted vale below for an extent of several miles. The day was unclouded, and in the remote perspective the Paps of Jura were even faintly discernable.

Finely contrasted with this sublime tract of Alpine scenery was the aspect of the peaceful Leven, meandering thro' a rich and fertile district, and the highly-cultivated counties of Renfrew and Ayr. Somewhat more to the right, the Firth of Clyde, the Rock of Aisla, the islands of Arran and Bute, with the ocean in the distance, attracted the attention of the fair enthusiast. Turning to the east, the Castles of Stirling and Edinburgh, and the windings of the Forth, met her view.

The charm which for some hours had wholly withdrawn her from self was dissolved, as by the wand of an enchantress, at the sight of these well-known and dearly-cherished objects. In thought she flew back to the peaceful happy home of her infancy: a thousand proofs of her brother's watchful tenderness rushed to her remembrance; she recalled the blissful period when, resting fondly on his arm, they had together traversed the groves and woods surrounding the Cottage, or, seated on the romantic margin of Glencross Water—"Whare a' that's sweet in spring an' simmer grow," she had listened with affectionate reverence to the lessons of wisdom which fell from his lips. She thought of the social circle which oft enlivened the fireside of Glencross Cottage, when, free from care, she had presided over the frolic and glee of the mirthful hour; and an involuntary sigh escaped from her bosom, at the idea that this happy

happy period of her existence had passed away for ever.

The last few days had indeed brought to her mind the melancholy conviction that duty and pleasure would never more be united, and that henceforward life would be to her a dreary blank.—"Oh, my affectionate brother!" thought she, "why did I leave thy protecting roof, where, for so many years, my days were days of happiness, and my nights passed in calm repose? Oh, how shall the favoured child of fortune endure this banishment from all?"

Lady Frazer started; she shuddered at the tendency of her own thoughts.—"Banishment!—Good Heaven! do I deem it banishment to follow the husband of my choice? But I will teach this rebellious heart to perform its duty. If sir Simon possess not the eye of taste, if his ear be insensible to the charms of harmony, if literature and science have no value in his eyes, still there must be

some points in his character with which it will be possible to assimilate."

To bury deep in her bosom the disappointment she mourned, to study well the character of her husband, to conform, as far as possible, to his tastes and habits, was the firm resolve of his lovely wife. She dried her tearful eyes, and, with a sweet smile, joined sir Simon, who was conversing with the guide.

Frazer was a staunch Highlander. He loved his country—not, indeed, because it was the scene of many a romantic tale, of many a chivalrous exploit—not because it was the home of his infancy, endeared to him by a train of kindly and tender associations, but because he could lord it over an ignorant and wretched herd of clansmen and vassals, with almost the power of an absolute prince.

Still this spurious love of country was gratified by the enthusiastic praises which its wild and sublime scenery drew from the lips of his fair companion; and, with something

something like a smile of good-humour, he proposed they should partake of the cheer provided for them by their attentive hostess.

The excellent claret of his friend completed his self-satisfaction; and during their descent, lady Frazer almost persuaded herself, that in the present frame of sir Simon's mind, she could recognize traces of that open hilarity of temper which had first won her youthful heart.

As they had ascended the mountain at a very early hour, it was still broad day when they again reached the border of the loch. Marion Frazer, with the buoyant spirits of youth, once more opened her bosom to the cheerings of hope. The scene around her was well calculated to harmonize her feelings. From the spot where she stood, waiting the approach of the boat, her eye caught an extensive reach of the loch, only broken and interrupted by jutting rocks

and picturesqe promontories. Through the transparent azure of its waters were distinguished the various-coloured pebbles which form its bottom, while shoals of trout and salmon, sporting near the surface, gave life and animation to the picture. A luxuriant crop of beautiful aquatic plants ornamented its borders. Light clouds, skimming across the face of the heavens, tinted with their various lights and shades its silvery waves, which reflected the woods and green pastures, the craggy rocks, and lowly cabins of the shepherds, scattered over the bottom of Ben Lomond.

Amid this enchanting display of grand and varied scenery, not the least captivating to her imagination were the isles with which the loch is studded. Some of them exhibited only open green pastures, dotted here and there with patches of tall trees; but the elevated hills on others, clothed with wood to their very summits, seemingly formed a delightful shade,

shade, impervious to the rays of a meridian sun.

Beautifully contrasted with this cheerful prospect is the funereal and gloomy foliage of the yew-tree, which abounds in one or two of these isles, as noticed by the poet of Ben Lomond—

> ——————————"Here
> ———was nurs'd this chosen tree,
> Planted of old, and rear'd with studious care,
> To freedom sacred, and the public weal."

On Inch Callock, or the Island of Nuns, the ruins of a chapel, half concealed by the surrounding foliage, attracted the notice of our fair traveller.

It is supposed, she was informed, to have been an appendage to a convent of holy sisters, a circumstance which gave the name to the island. Of those fair nuns nothing now is remembered; yet the spot must ever prove interesting, while extraordinary courage, and resistance to oppression, are regarded among

mankind, for it was the burying-place of the M'Gregors during the days of their prosperity.

When they reached the opposite margin of the loch, lady Frazer turned her head to take a farewell glimpse of its various beauties; and then slowly followed her companion to the carriage, which waited to reconvey them to the mansion of his friend.

CHAP-

CHAPTER IV.

The dear illusion will not last;
The era of enchantment's past;
The wild romance of life is done;
The real history is begun. LOGAN.

.....

——————————Her mind
Had wander'd from its dwelling; and her eyes—
They had not their own lustre, but the look
Which is not of the earth. BYRON.

A PLENTIFUL dinner awaited their arrival. Mrs. M'Intosh, in the absence of her son, had invited a nephew of her own, the young laird of Monteith, to do the honours of his house.

After the meal was finished, and before the ladies retired, the excursion to Ben Lomond was discussed; and lady Frazer heard, with a sigh, the delightful region she had traversed, the grand

and sublime scenery of which was worthy the pencil of a Salvator Rosa, only spoken of as affording a haunt to the roebuck, the ptarmigan, and osprey, which, even in the wild forests and lofty summits of Ben Lomond, are not safe from the pursuit of the hunter and fowler.

The old lady, fatigued with the exertions of the day, no sooner seated herself on an old-fashioned couch that occupied nearly one side of the drawing-room, than she sunk into a profound doze, leaving her youthful guest at liberty to pursue her own melancholy ruminations.

Sad and sorrowful indeed were the reflections of Marion Frazer, for too late was she convinced that she had mistaken a transient liking, the result of self-satisfied vanity, for that genuine affection, which, being founded on esteem, is permanent as the excellence which gave it birth.

Seated

Seated at an old-fashioned balcony, which overlooked a dreary tract of heath, with her cheek resting on her hand, the youthful wife long ruminated on her blighted prospects before she was joined by the gentlemen.

As they entered the drawing-room, she recoiled with dismay on beholding the flushed face and disordered mien of sir Simon. Frequently since her ill-fated union with the baronet, she had perceived, with uneasiness, that he had always been the last to attend the tea-table. His love of sociality was the excuse with which she endeavoured to deceive herself; but the veil she had interposed to soften or conceal the failings of him who ought to be dearest to her heart was gradually rent from before her eyes, and displayed the deformity of that character which her guileless heart had deemed perfect. With a boy for his companion, devotion to the bottle alone could have de-

tained him from her side. She had long been convinced that no intimate communion of mind, taste, or feeling, could ever subsist between them; but that she should be united to the slave of a degrading vice shot a pang through her bosom that it required all her fortitude to support. The animated converse of the evening, in which sir Simon bore his share, conveyed no pleasure to her care-fraught heart; for it was not the habitual home-breathing cheerfulness which diffuses gladness throughout the social circle, but that unnatural and fitful flow of spirits which sinks into sullenness and gloom, as the effects of the inebriating draughts which gave rise to it become diminished.

Lady Frazer could not bring her spirits to the tone of her companions; she therefore pleaded fatigue, and retired early to her chamber.

No sooner was she alone, than she covered her face with her hands, and burst

burst into an agony of tears. But hers was not a mind long to continue thus overcome. The first shock of wounded delicacy past, her well-regulated mind taught her the necessity of self-control; and though the conflict was severe, she ceased not the struggle till she attained that dignified composure which had for some time superseded the playful archness, which, in days of happiness, had been the habitual temper of her mind. But though able to command her feelings, she could not wholly dismiss them; and after a restless and perturbed night, poor Marion rose, pale and unrefreshed.

On joining the family at the morning repast, her kind hostess observed the great alteration in her appearance, and warmly pressed her to continue her guest a few days longer, till she had recovered the fatigue of her yesterday's excursion. But lady Frazer, who was extremely anxious to reach her future home, in the hope of finding a relief to her sorrows in

in the conversation of her early friend, refused, on the plea of that friend's precarious state of health, to prolong her stay.

Sir Simon, who never for a moment suffered the comfort or convenience of others to interfere with his own, recollected that the period of grouse-shooting approached, and neither the pale cheeks nor sunken eyes of his youthful bride could restrain his impatience to be gone.

The carriage was therefore ordered to the door; and taking leave of the hospitable Mrs. M'Intosh, lady Frazer ascended the steps with alacrity, as if a change of scene could remove the melancholy anticipations which weighed heavy on her heart.

The young laird of Monteith was to accompany them through the first day's journey, which lay in the direction of his father's domain.

No sooner was the carriage in motion,

than

than the two gentlemen, heedless of their fair companion, commenced a discussion on the eternal subject of hunting, fowling, and fishing, and on the laws by which the wild beasts of the air, the earth, and the water, are deemed the exclusive property of certain privileged classes.

The sentiments displayed in the course of this conversation fell painfully on the heart of lady Frazer, for they would not have disgraced a Nero or Caligula; but she only testified her dissent from the opinions of her companions by a dignified silence, rightly judging that argument could make no impression on minds that would doom to instant death a fellow-man, who, exercising the first law of his being, partook of the blessings so liberally scattered in his path by the bountiful hand of nature. Shutting her ears as much as possible to the conversation of her fellow-travellers, lady Frazer

zer gave herself up to the contemplation of nature,

——— "In every charm supreme,
Whose vot'ries feast on raptures ever new."

As they proceeded on their road, a valley, green with luxuriant herbage, and bounded by a number of conical hills, rising almost to the height of mountains, opened on their left, conveying the most perfect idea of rural repose.

After a short drive, however, amid these smiling solitudes, their road passed over abrupt cliffs, and hanging promontories, commanding a grand sweep of Loch Lomond for many miles, running into shady bays, or losing itself beneath impending rocks. Frequently lady Frazer turned her head to catch a last look of this enchanting scene, till entering a thick wood, she could only obtain casual glimpses of the loch through some openings

ings in the trees. Again, however, approaching an open space towards the northern extremity of the loch, her eye once more rested on the wild stupendous crags and towering scenery of Ben Lomond. Again embowered in a thick wood, the diversified forms of ancient moss-grown oaks, or pines, with their half-bare roots fantastically wreathed about the rocks—the glittering of the mountain-torrents, as they rushed down the precipitous sides of the broken steeps to join the waters of Loch Lomond—the murmurs of the solitary stock-dove, mingling with those of the stream, afforded a different, but not less interesting picture.

After some further progress, the travellers quitted the delightful vicinity of the loch, and continued their route to the inn of Arroquhar, where they proposed remaining for the night.

On the following morning, breakfast was no sooner over, than young Monteith

teith took his departure, and shortly afterwards our travellers resumed their journey. A short ride brought them to the Vale of Glencroe. Dreary wildness and desolation are the characteristics of this celebrated pass. Scarcely a tree, and but a single habitation, are to be found in the course of the glen. Sometimes the road is immured amid high and craggy mountains, almost meeting above, while in other spaces they retire, so as to admit a view of patches of scanty vegetation, fit only for the pasturage of sheep or goats. In several places, the only visible object is the white foam of some cataract, pouring down the sides of the hills, the sound of which alone disturbs the universal silence that reigns around.

The awful stillness of this solitary region was in unison with the melancholy colour of lady Frazer's fate; and tears unconsciously trickled down her pallid cheek, as she sat beside her unsocial companion,

companion, who hummed, in an under voice, some national cronach, as if to beguile the tediousness of the way.

After an uncomfortable drive of more than five miles, the road suddenly emerged from the glen, and wound up a steep acclivity. Lady Frazer shaded her eyes for a few moments with her hand from the painful glare of a meridian sun; then turning to her husband, she was about to make some observation on the dreary pass they had quitted, but the words died on her lips, as she gazed on the undefinable expression of his countenance, in which she shuddered to think traces of guilt were discernible. After an inward struggle, however, his features relaxed; but his eyes continued to wander over the moorland track, as if in search of some dreaded object, and h petulantly urged the postillions to speed.

Self-respect and wounded affection kept lady Frazer silent; and after reaching

ing the bottom of the opposite descent, an acute turn in the road brought them to the entrance of the Valley of Kinlass.

Aroused from the reverie into which she had fallen, by sir Simon hastily throwing himself back into the corner of the carriage, she looked from the window, and beheld an object which rivetted all her attention. On a jutting crag near the entrance of the vale, stood a female figure, so fair, so fragile, as to look like the airy vision of another world. Her head was uncovered, and her fine flaxen hair fantastically interwoven with sprigs of heath. A loose white garment, fastened round the waist with a tartan ribbon, completed her attire. Her eyes roved in vacancy, till catching a view of the carriage, she uttered a wild unearthly shriek, which sunk to the heart of lady Frazer, and would have dashed herself from the point of the crag, had not a ready hand held her back. The saviour

saviour of the poor maniac was a young man, with a mild prepossessing countenance, whose dress bespoke him to be a pastor of the presbyterian church.

In a few minutes the carriage entered the gorge of the valley, and sir Simon, resuming confidence in proportion as the scene of his alarm continued to recede, in a hurried voice informed his agitated companion that the fair creature she had seen was the insane daughter of an old steward of his father's, and had been placed by him under the care of Mrs. Glen, the widowed mother of the young man who saved her from the dangerous leap she had meditated.

Lady Frazer only bowed, for the hesitating and hurried voice in which this communication was made, the previous anxiety displayed by sir Simon to urge forward the horses, the wandering of his eye, as if in search of some dreaded object, his appalled glance, and evident desire for concealment on beholding

holding the unhappy girl, all convinced her that something beyond the common feelings of humanity must have produced the perturbation she witnessed.

Scarcely had the carriage proceeded a quarter of a mile, when, by the obscure light that penetrated through the overhanging foliage of this dismal glen, lady Frazer observed the unfortunate sufferer darting with the rapidity of lightning down a woody declivity on the left. Sometimes she caught a glimpse of her white garment floating in the breeze; at others, the umbrageous foliage concealed her wholly from view. She was followed by her reverend guardian; but, with that cunning incident to her disease, he no sooner approached, than, eluding his grasp, she bounded into a different track, and was again hidden from the view.

Intensely watching the re-appearance of the maniac, lady Frazer gave a scream of

of horror, as she saw her leap from a shelving rock into the middle of the road, only a few paces before the carriage, which she expected would instantly crush her to death. But momentarily recovering her feet, while the postillion checked the horses, she sprung forward, and clinging to the open window—"Foul fiend! have I found you at last?" she exclaimed, in a voice of agony. "Give me back my Bertha! I buried her deep in the cold earth, but even there you found her out, and robbed me of my last treasure!"

"Remove this mad woman!" vociferated the baronet, with a countenance distorted with rage and every evil passion. "Dearly shall you pay for this neglect, sir!" he continued, addressing Mr. Glen, who at that moment came up to his unfortunate charge, and was endeavouring, in the most soothing accents, to induce her to return.

"Do you threaten, sir Simon?" said the

the youthful divine, while he cast a glance of mingled scorn and indignation on the crest-fallen baronet: "had I been aware of your passing, for Bertha's own sake she should have been secluded from your sight." Seeing lady Frazer pale and agitated, he continued—"Be not alarmed, madam; this poor girl is perfectly harmless and docile, except when she beholds those who really have, or who she believes have injured her."

Lady Frazer, with tears in her eyes, took the hand of Bertha.—"Return," she said, "with your friend for the present; some time hence I may see you again, and together we will seek your lost treasure."

The tone of compassion in which these few words were uttered found their way to the heart of the poor forlorn one, for the frantic expression of her countenance softened into sorrow; and, seemingly forgetful of the purpose which induced

duced her to pursue the carriage at so much hazard to herself, with slow and languid steps she retraced her way to the thicket; while Mr. Glen, without noticing the baronet, bowed respectfully to lady Frazer, and followed his unfortunate companion.

The sight of this unhappy maniac fell like an icebolt on the heart of her ladyship. She conjectured that the lovely girl had too surely been the victim of sir Simon's wiles, whom she regarded with a feeling nearly approaching to abhorrence.

Buried in painful anticipations of the future, she sat silent and abstracted, unheedful of the length of the way, or the gloomy grandeur of the surrounding scenery, till roused from her painful reverie by perceiving that they had emerged from the glen, and approached the shore of a large water, the boundaries of which were not discernible.

In a short space they reached a comfortable inn, where sir Simon proposed remaining till the following day.

Fatigue was again pleaded by lady Frazer for retiring as soon as dinner was finished; nor did the baronet seem unwilling to be left alone.

Seated by a blazing wood-fire, in a clean, though homely bedchamber, she endeavoured to arrange her scattered ideas. Fatally for her peace, she was too late convinced that she must not look to the husband of her choice to heighten the pleasures, or sooth the toils of her pilgrimage through life. In all her little difficulties, she had hitherto relied on the sound mind and steady principles of her brother; but now, when assailed by an overwhelming affliction, even that consolation was denied her, for she felt that the errors of a husband were no proper subject for confidence: but if they were, could she selfishly resolve to cloud the serene days of an affectionate

fectionate brother, by imparting to him her cureless sorrow?—"No, never, revered guide of my youth! never shalt thou know the sufferings of the devoted Marion!"

Tears flowed fast from the eyes of lady Fraser, as the thoughts of home rose to her mind. Soothed, however, and relieved by this salutary burst of grief, she was enabled steadily to regard her present and future prospects, and soon became convinced that much, perhaps the all of comfort she had to expect in after life, would depend on her own conduct in the trying situation in which she was placed.

Long had she endeavoured to conceal from her own mind the difference of sir Simon's behaviour during the days of courtship and those of wedded life; but now that the mortifying conviction had forced itself upon her mind, ought she supinely to yield herself up a prey to

unavailing sorrow? But a suspicion of his worthlessness combined with disappointed affection to barb the arrow that rankled in her heart. Yet, on what grounds did she accuse him of culpability? On the ravings of a maniac! Would she herself wish to be so judged? True, Mr. Glen had addressed him in a tone which indicated that he believed him to be the author of Bertha's misfortune; yet it might, after all, be only the expression of a proud spirit, roused by the haughty address of the baronet.

Be that, however, as it may, this angelic woman heroically resolved to check her rising doubts, and, if possible, cheerfully to perform her self-imposed duties. When, therefore, sir Simon sent to inquire if tea should be ordered up to her, she followed the servant to the apartment below.

He was seated with his back towards the

the door; but on hearing her light tread, started up, and with something like the animation he displayed in the early days of their acquaintance, took her hand, and placed her at the table.

Uncongenial were the dispositions of the baronet and his lady, and few the ideas they possessed in common; yet, determined to please and be pleased, the youthful wife led the conversation to Highland manners and Highland superstitions, a theme always interesting to sir Simon, who related so many anecdotes illustrative of these subjects, that the evening passed over more cheerfully than could have been expected.

As if by a kind of tacit agreement, the suffering Bertha was never alluded to; but in the silence and darkness of night, her image haunted the pillow of lady Frazer. Resolutely, however, she repelled the harassing idea, and hailed the return of morning in the hope of

losing, amid the active duties of the day, the remembrance of a subject so painful.

CHAP-

CHAPTER V.

Oh, frail inconstancy of mortal state!
One hour dejected, and the next elate!
Rais'd by false hopes, or by false fears depress'd,
How different passions sway the human breast!
Now smiling pleasure with fair charms invite;
Now frowning horrors with black stains affright;
Future distrusts the present joys control,
And Fancy triumphs o'er the reasoning soul.

PATTISON.

As the military road in which they had hitherto travelled now branched off to the right, the remainder of their journey was, of necessity, to be performed on horseback.

With the earliest dawn, lady Frazer left her restless bed. The pelisse and large straw-bonnet in which she had till now travelled were exchanged for a riding-habit of the appropriate tartan of

the Frazers. On her head she wore a blue cloth bonnet, in the fashion of that worn by the Highland chieftain, surmounted by a plume of white feathers; a plaid, fastened on the left shoulder by an emerald brooch, completed her attire.

As her image was reflected from an old-fashioned mirror which ornamented the walls of her chamber, a secret pleasure fluttered in her bosom, on contemplating those charms which nature had lavished on her with so bountiful a hand, and which her Highland dress displayed to the greatest advantage. But a sudden sense of her blighted happiness quickly rose to check the rising vanity, and the unbidden tear rushed to her eyes.

During the brief period of her wedded happiness, she had planned her present costume, as an agreeable surprise to her husband, when she should enter the land of his fathers. It was one of those little

little devices inspired by a refined and delicate tenderness; but, alas! no corresponding feeling animated the bosom of him on whom she had bestowed her youthful affections. Little did she dream, when sir Simon pressed her to his bosom a blooming bride, that she should ever find cause to regret having listened to his vows. In the delusion of her glowing fancy, she had pictured him adorned with every perfection, and worshipped the ideal being of her own creation. Exiled to the dreariest deserts of Siberia, with him for a companion, she could have been happy—his presence would have divested even a polar winter of its gloom; sheltered in his arms, she would have preferred the lowliest hut to the regal dome of splendour, unblessed by his affection.

What a revolution had a few short months produced! The genial current of her feelings, checked and thrown back by the haughty manners and coarse

sentiments of the being she had endowed with every virtue, the present was regarded by her with dismay—the future almost without hope. Yet, though the path of duty would, for her, be no more strewed with flowers, she struggled against the rising spirit of discontent, which was fast stealing into her bosom, and recalling to remembrance the principles a beloved brother had early taught her to revere, determined to combat with fortitude the trials with which she might yet be assailed.

Assuming, therefore, an air of cheerfulness foreign to her feelings, she hastened to join her husband at the morning repast, but, on inquiry, learned that he had walked out. Unwilling again to trust herself with her own reflections, she rose to follow his example, when the door opened, and the object of her thoughts entered.

Self-gratification was the motive power which regulated all the baronet's actions. When

When he first beheld the lovely Marion Ferguson, his senses yielded to the captivation of her charms; but, unable to appreciate either the high mental cultivation or elegant accomplishments of the enchanting girl, satiety soon succeeded to possession, and in a few short months she became a neglected wife, or at least was only regarded as a brilliant addition to the train of vassals which swelled the pomp and splendour of their proud lord.

Now, when he beheld her radiant in youth and beauty, arrayed in the garb of his native glen, surprise, pleasure, and gratified pride, sparkled in his eyes, as, in all the fervour of passion, he sank at her feet, and, unable to express his feelings, could only press to his lips the hand she held out to him.

What a magic transition took place in the bosom of his unsophisticated wife, from the abyss of despair to the soothing hope that his heart still beat in uni-

son with her own! Alas! deceived by the yet glowing fervour of an attachment which had withstood his neglect, indifference, and even scorn, she mistook the meteor glare of passion for the calm steady sunshine of renewed affection. In the delight of returning confidence, she even went so far as mentally to accuse herself of some neglect, some remissness, which had given rise to the coldness of her husband.

Seated at the breakfast-table, the eyes of sir Simon continued to wander over the figure of his beautiful companion.—"How proud I shall be," said he, as if answering to his own thoughts, "to present her to my people as the wife of their chief! In that garb, and with that dignified mien, even aunt Janet cannot think the Frazers disgraced by a Lowland connexion."

Lady Frazer started; something like an idea of humiliation crossed her mind at the bare supposition that under any circumstances

circumstances her name should be coupled with disgrace, or that any adventitious aid should be deemed necessary to gain her a welcome into the family of her husband. But self-deceived, like the monarch in the palace of Truth, she construed the insulting speech into a compliment, and was even gratified at sir Simon's anxiety that she should lead captive the deep-rooted prejudices of his people.

"We have still fifteen miles to travel before we reach home," said the baronet, "and our escort has not yet appeared in sight;" and he went out to see whether he could descry their approach.

Lady Frazer, from the window of the little parlour, followed him with her eyes, as he ascended an eminence opposite the house, to obtain a view of the road leading to Castle Frazer. His manly athletic form, portly gait, and a complexion ruddy with youth and health, seen thro' the medium of affection, recalled to her mind

mind the lover of her choice; and insensibly she gave vent to her feelings, by warbling a few stanzas of one of the popular airs of her native country:—

"The Lowland lads think they are fine;
But, oh! they're vain and idly gaudy.
How much unlike the graceful mien
And manly looks of my Highland laddie!
Oh, my bonny, bonny Highland laddie!
My handsome, charming Highland laddie!
May Heaven still guard, and love reward,
The Lowland lass and her Highland laddie!

"Nae greater joy I'll e'er pretend,
Than that his love prove true and steady,
Like mine to him, which ne'er shall end,
While Heaven preserves my Highland laddie.
Oh, my bonny, bonny Highland laddie!
My handsome, charming Highland laddie!
May Heaven still guard, and love reward,
Our Lowland lass and her Highland laddie!"

She started, on hearing the last two lines of the chorus repeated in the fine sonorous voice of sir Simon, who had entered unobserved, and turning round, was rapturously pressed to his bosom.

In less than a quarter of an hour, the trampling

trampling of horses announced the arrival of the expected escort from Castle Frazer.

This was one among the few days in the calendar of Marion Frazer's married life that might be marked with a white stone; for scarcely were the delicious tears she had shed at the seeming kindness of her husband dried on her cheek, when a servant entered, and delivered to her a letter from her early friend, the sister of her affection.

In it the sweet girl lamented that continued debility prevented her from meeting a relative so dear at Cairndow, as she intended. She dwelt with enthusiasm on their re-union, sketched plans for their amusements and studies, which shewed how much her heart was in the subject, and concluded by entreating her acceptance of a Highland pony, which had been carefully educated for her use.

Lady Frazer had scarcely finished reading

reading her letter, when sir Simon re-entered, to inform her all was in readiness for their departure.

She was not slow in following him to the door, where Donald stood ready caparisoned. The little animal seemed grateful for the caresses she bestowed on him, and proudly cantered off with his lovely burden.

On leaving the little comfortable inn at Cairndow, the road lay, for some time, along the banks of Loch Fyne, one of the largest estuaries of North Britain, and which communicates with the open sea on both sides of the Isle of Arran. A brilliant morning sun was reflected from the waves of this noble water, which is considerably varied in its outline by numerous creeks and jutting promontories.

With renovated spirits lady Frazer gazed on the magnificent scene before her, till the road, or rather track, in which they were now travelling, wound round the

the base of an abrupt mountain, which gradually shut out the prospect from their sight.

After riding for many miles over a trackless and uninviting heath, which formed a striking contrast to the finely-wooded district they had just left, our travellers reached the precincts of a deep glen, the abrupt and rocky sides of which were only here and there covered with moss and lichens, while a few solitary and stunted birch and oak trees, sprouting from the fissures of the rocks, impended over the gulf below.

Marion Frazer was, however, insensible to the dreary desolation which surrounded her, for the good-humour and hilarity of her companion increased with every mile he travelled nearer to that home where he reigned "the chief in power."

He complimented her on her equestrian powers, and on the fearless intrepidity with which she guided Donald along

along a path so narrow that one false step would have inevitably precipitated her to the bottom of the glen. He anticipated the delight he would receive on listening to her fine voice in the Cave of Echoes, and even talked of initiating her into the sports of the field.

Intellectual pleasures, the refinements of taste, the delights of friendship, or the pleasure arising from the exercise of benevolence, entered not into the baronet's scheme of happiness: but his young and sanguine companion was not disposed to examine too strictly the foundation on which he reared the fairy palace; she saw his face lighted up with the smile of good-humour, and Hope gilded the future in her brightest hues.

After reaching the northern extremity of the glen, the path they had pursued for more than a mile ascended a gentle acclivity; then turning to the right, it skirted the base of a huge bare crag,

crag, when suddenly a castellated mansion greeted their sight on the brow of an opposite promontory, as yet dimly seen through the surrounding vapour.

"Castle Frazer!" said sir Simon, in a tone of exultation, as, laying his hand on the neck of Donald, he pointed out to lady Frazer her future home.

It was a large square stone edifice, with turretted corners, and a narrow arched door-way. A mountain-torrent ran in front of the house, over which a rude bridge of grey stone had been thrown. A few straggling beech and plane trees grew in the immediate vicinity of the mansion; but all around, as far as the eye could reach, was naked heath and rock. It was, in the language of Ossian, "a desert tinged with the beams of the west." No trace of human habitation was discernible in this still cold region, which seemed as if it had been hitherto untrodden by the foot of man.

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The last rays of the setting sun were sinking in the west as they crossed the drawbridge, when sir Simon, taking a large hunting-horn from one of the attendants, blew a shrill blast, which reverberated from crag to crag.

Lady Frazer started at the sound; an indefinable foreboding of evil stole over her heart. She was agitated at the slightest sound; even the withered leaves of autumn, fluttering in the evening breeze, appalled her; but on discovering the spires of the gloomy turrets of Castle Frazer, she involuntarily reined in Donald, and for a while could not even summon courage to proceed.

The mansion, to her mind, wore an air of desolation, heightened by the mystic gloom of twilight. In a few seconds, however, lights streamed through every window, or rather loophole, in front of the heavy pile; and the sound of a bagpipe was heard playing the gathering lilt of the clan.

"Prepare

"Prepare yourself for a Highland welcome," said the baronet, in a tone so cheerful that it communicated itself to the bosom of the trembling Marion, and making an effort to disperse the starting tear, she gaily inquired at sir Simon what part she was to act in the coming scene?

"Appear ever in your own charming character," he gallantly rejoined, "and you must lead captive every one who beholds you."

A sweet smile was all the answer she had time to return, for at this moment they perceived, winding down the circuitous pathway, a cavalcade of about twenty or thirty people, arrayed in the garb of their clan, and preceded by the family piper.

On their near approach, Frazer leapt from his horse, and assisting his lady to alight, drew her arm through his own, and giving the animals in charge to his

more

more immediate attendant, proceeded on foot to the Castle.

On meeting his people, they testified their welcome by a shout, accompanied by a prayer for his happiness and that of his lady, uttered in their native Gaelic; but Marion, judging from the expression of their features, as seen through the dusky gloom, and from the vacillation of their tones, suspected that neither the welcome nor prayer sprung from the heart.

Sir Simon took no other notice of the greeting, except by a supercilious bend of his head, when the vassals, falling back on each side of the path, formed an avenue, through which the baronet walked, or rather marched, with lady Frazer leaning on his arm.

Gratified pride shone in every feature; his very form seemed to dilate at the servile homage he received, and from which the generous mind of his companion

companion revolted with a mingled feeling of pity and disgust.

Little time, however, was left her for painful rumination, for in a few minutes they entered the court which surrounded the building.

CHAP.

CHAPTER VI.

On his dark face a scorching clime
And toil had done the work of time;
Roughened the brow, the temples bar'd,
And sable hairs with silver shar'd;
Yet left what age alone could tame,
The lip of pride, the eye of flame. SCOTT.

IN an old-fashioned hall, where hung the tattered banners of the house of Frazer, and the walls of which were decorated with many a trophy of the chace, stood Miss Janet Frazer, surrounded by all those of her clansmen who could claim the honour of being related to the Frazers, in however remote a degree. Her naturally coarse features had assumed more than their usual harshness, at being compelled to witness the entrance of a Saxon mistress into the halls of her progenitors. She was arrayed in the

the tartan of her clan, made up in the fashion of the foregoing century; and on her head she wore a curch, exactly like those worn by the wives of the vassals, only of a finer material. Her sallow and shrivelled skin rendered more prominent, in appearance, her high cheek-bones, while her small grey eyes, peeping from beneath a pair of bushy and lyart eyebrows, gave a sinister expression to her countenance.

When sir Simon led up to her his blushing wife, her malignant spirit crouched for the moment beneath the calm self-possession and dignified mien of lady Frazer. As if in disdain for every thing Lowland, she, however, pronounced her welcome in her native Gaelic, to which Marion, with a sweet smile, replied in the same language.

She was afterwards successively presented to each of the friends, and received by them with the greatest courtesy. One of them was an interesting

figure, whose form seemed rather bent with sorrow than with age. To him sir Simon slightly and carelessly performed the ceremony of introduction; and Marion fancied that she could observe the slight blush of wounded feeling pass over his cheek at this apparent neglect. She endeavoured, however, to compensate for any want of attention on the part of the baronet, by the cordiality and respect with which she returned his compliments.

Lady Frazer, who could scarcely restrain her anxiety during this tedious ceremonial, now turned to her husband, and faltered out the name of her friend.

"Ay, true!" said sir Simon to his aunt, "what has become of my little moping sister?"

Miss Janet Frazer, who was the epitome of every thing harsh and disagreeable, replied, in a tone of contemptuous bitterness—"You will find her in the *boudoir*,

boudoir, as she calls it. Notwithstanding the fuss she makes about you, lady Frazer, she declined appearing to do the proper honour to the spouse of sir Simon Frazer of that Ilk."

Surprised out of her habitual politeness by such a petty display of malevolence, Marion turned from her without deigning a reply, and laying hold of the baronet's arm, entreated to be immediately conducted to her friend.

Crossing the vestibule, sir Simon threw open a door, opposite to that of the large hall they had quitted, and Marion was instantly pressed to the bosom of her earliest friend.

For some time tears were the only language of these two interesting women; but at length, recovering some degree of composure, Helen led her friend to a sofa, and placed herself by her side.—"Welcome, my dear Marion!" she said, "welcome to your home, and to the heart of your sister! I was un-

equal to the task of joining in the ridiculous pageant in which you have just borne a share, and had not sufficient influence with aunt Janet to prevent it altogether. But you must be fatigued with your ride over our rugged mountains: I will order you a cup of coffee before we are summoned to the dining-table."

Having partaken of the refreshing beverage, the friends retired to the apartment appropriated as a dressing-room to lady Frazer. She had scarcely time to change her dress before the sound of the bagpipe announced dinner.

The sisters were habited alike in the finest muslin, with no other ornament on the head but their own luxuriant tresses. Marion presented a tartan silk scarf to her friend, and threw a similar one carelessly over her own shoulders. —"This must be my panoply," she said, with a faint smile, "against the evil

evil eye of cross aunt Janet, as you used to call her in our days of childish happiness, though I believe no effort on my part will ever reconcile her to a Saxon niece."

Helen pressed the hand of her friend; and arm in arm they proceeded to the hall.

If lady Frazer had appeared lovely in the picturesque garb of the morning, every charm was heightened by the elegant, though plain dress she now wore. It is true, she was no longer the blooming, sportive Hebe, whose arch smile found the way to every heart; but if anxiety had partly robbed her cheek of its bloom, she appeared, if possible, more touchingly beautiful, in the eyes of her sister, than when last they parted at Glencross Cottage.

With ill-concealed pride and exultation, sir Simon sprung forward as they entered, and taking the hand of his beauteous wife, led her to the upper end

of the table, and would have placed her in an old-fashioned canopied chair, but she made a motion, as if willing to give precedence to Miss Janet Frazer, who stood by its side.

"This is the seat of honour, and of right belongs to you, as my wife and the mistress of this mansion," said the baronet, in no very gentle voice; and Marion, with a smile, acquiesced in his wishes.

A frown lowered on the harsh visage of aunt Janet, as, with native dignity, the youthful wife presided over the hospitable board; but so undeviating were her attentions to all present, and such the winning sweetness of her manners, that even malignity itself could find nothing to condemn.

No sooner had the ladies retired, than sir Simon was gratified by the warm and reiterated eulogiums bestowed on his choice by the rude sons of Caledonia. One only of his clansmen remained mute

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on the subject; yet captain Malcolm Frazer was better fitted than any other to appreciate the merits of the fair object of their praise. But a feeling of compassion, that so lovely a flower should have been transplanted into a soil so uncongenial, mingled with his admiration, and checked the congratulations that rose to his lips. His silence, however, was unnoticed; for, poor and independent of spirit, he was barely treated with distant civility by the haughty chief of his clan, whom he, in his turn, regarded with feelings of the greatest contempt.

Captain Malcolm Frazer had served with honour to himself during the revolutionary war in North America; but, having no friend to forward his interest with those in power, he returned at the peace still a subaltern.

From the number of officers belonging to his regiment who had fallen during this sanguinary contest, promotion however had become his due; but many

a tedious month passed away in irksome attendance in the public offices, before his claim was even listened to. At length he received the intimation that he was promoted to a company; but the joyful intelligence was damped by the concluding paragraph of the letter, in which he was informed that, in consequence of the material reduction on the peace establishment, he was placed on the half-pay list.

"To make room for some baby-minion of fortune!" indignantly burst from the lips of the veteran, as he dashed the packet on the floor.

His beloved Emily, the faithful wife of his bosom, who had shared in all the fatigues and dangers of his campaigns in the new world, looked in his face with one of her most bewitching smiles, softly articulating—"Another *War Office disappointment!* Why, my dear Malcolm, why will you continue your fruitless applications? Since the death of my

my revered brother, I have no tie to England; let us therefore retire to your native glen, where, blessed with health, peace, and competence, for there your small pittance will be a competence, we may rear our blooming offspring, at a distance from the low-minded proud, who too often overwhelm with contempt the virtuous children of poverty."

Malcolm, though he had been seven years a husband, still continued a lover. He caught his Emily to his bosom, and informed her of his frustrated hopes.

"Let us rather rejoice that the same fate overtook you not while a lieutenant. Now you can have no objections to follow my plan."

None were offered; and in six days from this period, the brave captain Malcolm Frazer, with his family, were on the road to Argyleshire.

Young Frazer, who was a fine courageous boy, just turned of six years of age, with his playmate, a little black

urchin, whom the captain had brought with him from America, were wild with joy, on escaping from the constraint of a lodging-house, in a confined street in London, and being once more permitted to breathe the fresh air of heaven. His wife, the sharer of his toils and his pleasures, sat smiling by his side, with her little nursling, Emily, asleep on her lap.

Surrounded by so many treasures, Malcolm could not be termed unfortunate, yet, as the postchaise, which was to convey them to Deptford, rattled over the stones, he sighed to think that all the sanguine anticipations of his youth, all his hopes of fame and fortune, had terminated at last in a captain's half-pay. But not for himself alone did he heave the deep-drawn sigh. That his beloved Emily should be compelled to relinquish that rank in society she was so well fitted to adorn; that, banished to a barren wilderness, and deprived of all

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the elegances of civilized life, she should sink into the mere domestic drudge, was an idea that could not be dwelt on without the most acute pain. His children too — what a lot was theirs! Charles, it was true, might earn fame and fortune with his sword, or rather, perhaps, after years of danger, fatigue, and patient endurance, he might, like his father, return to his native country, to meet only injustice and neglect; but his smiling cherub, the infant Emily, who would protect this fragile flower, should death deprive her of a father?

Mrs. Frazer also sat silent and abstracted; but the sweet smile that played round her mouth denoted that her thoughts were of a more pleasing kind than those which occupied the mind of her husband.

Admiral Bouverie fell in the moment of victory, towards the close of a gallant action with the French fleet. His heart-broken widow soon followed him to the

grave, leaving their two infant children under the guardianship of her brother.

At seventeen Edward Bouverie obtained an ensign's commission in the forty-second regiment of foot; and two years afterwards the blooming Emily gave her hand to lieutenant Frazer, the intimate friend of her brother.

Shortly after her nuptials, the regiment to which they both belonged was ordered to America, whither she accompanied it. On the fatal plains of Saratoga, ensign Bouverie received his death-wound, which he only survived a few days.

Grief for the loss of an only brother, and anxiety for the safety of a much-loved husband, continually exposed to danger and peril, clouded the spring-tide of Mrs. Frazer's existence. Like a weary mariner, long tossed on the stormy billows of the ocean, she hailed, therefore, the solitude of Argyleshire as a haven of rest.—"There," thought

"she,

she, " while blessed with the society of my Malcolm, and cheered by the infantile hilarity of our darling children, no cares shall intrude to disturb the calm tranquillity of our humble dwelling; there——"

But the day-dreams of both parents were dissolved by the joyous shouts of the boys, on beholding the forest of masts which rose on each side of the Thames, of which they had just obtained a peep.

A few minutes more brought them to Deptford, opposite to which lay the vessel that was to waft captain Frazer and his family to the shores of Caledonia.

Every thing being stowed on board, they set sail with a fair wind, and soon reached in safety the destined port; and as expeditiously as the nature of travelling in the Highlands would admit, they proceeded to what was to be their future home.

CHAP-

CHAPTER VII.

So by some sage enchanter's spell,
(As old Arabian fablers tell),
Amid the solitary wild,
Luxuriant gardens gaily smil'd;
From sapphire rocks the fountains stream'd;
With golden fruit the branches beam'd.

WHARTON.

THE profuse hospitality of Malcolm Frazer's progenitors had compelled them, from time to time, to alienate the greatest portion of their once-princely territory; and the last of their immediate descendants now found himself only the possessor of a few acres of land, and a house, little better than a cottage, situate on the banks of Loch Fyne.

Leaving the children under the care of the landlady at Cairndow, captain Frazer

Frazer and his lady, escorted by the landlord, proceeded to inspect the property.

On entering the dilapidated dwelling, where all was damp, cheerless, and fast running to decay, Malcolm shook his head in despair, and was about to relinquish every attempt to render it habitable; but his Emily, ever fertile in resources, declared it was a delightful situation, and, with the assistance of a carpenter, she would undertake in a few weeks to render it fit for the reception of their family.

Habitually accustomed to yield to her superior judgment in domestic arrangements, captain Frazer made no farther opposition to her plan, though still incredulous in regard to its success.

A wright, recommended by the landlord, therefore attended on the following morning, to receive Mrs. Frazer's directions; and, assisted by her correct taste, at the end of six weeks, the miserable dwelling

dwelling would not have been disgraced in a comparison with the *cottage ornée* of the south.

The entrance-hall, which occupied nearly a half of the basement, was contracted to a size more befitting the dimensions of the building, by which means the apartments on each side were greatly enlarged.

One of these was fitted up as a dining-parlour, and opened, by folding doors, into a small sitting-room behind. The other, which Mrs. Frazer termed a saloon, was not divided. The glass, carefully removed from the old cumbrous window-frames, was fitted into others, light and airy, which reached to the floor. The room above the dining-parlour was divided into a bed-chamber and dressing-room; and that over the saloon was set apart for the nursery.

Above the landing-place, on the first story, was a kind of attic, crammed with lumber of every description; tables, chairs,

chairs, broken chariot-wheels, saddles, rusty swords, targets, battered coats of arms, and torn banners, which told a tale of other times, when the house of Frazer shone in its pristine greatness.

From this heterogeneous mass of confusion Mrs. Frazer drew many useful articles of furniture; and among other things, a set of dining-tables, with curiously-carved borders, bearing an inscription, which purported that they were made from a liburnum tree, cut down in the glen of Ardkinlass in 1690. These, when cleaned from the dust of years, and repolished, constituted the chief ornament of her dining-parlour.

As soon as she could reach the little window which peeped from underneath the thatch, she gazed with delighted enthusiasm on the prospect which presented itself to her view. The mountains which she had traversed in her approach to Cairndow extended their broad

broad and lofty masses along the opposite shore of Loch Fyne, opening so as to afford a view across the water into the gloomy but picturesque vale of Kinglass. The stillness and desolation of this solitary glen were strikingly in opposition to the picture of cheerful, active industry that fell more immediately under her view. The sunbeams danced gaily on the bosom of the loch, which was covered with fishing craft of every description, whose white and sometimes well-patched sails fluttered in the breeze, as they scudded backwards and forwards into the little creeks and bays which vary the outline of this noble water.

Farther to the right, the curling smoke which arose from a well-sheltered valley marked the site of an unobtrusive village, concealed among the surrounding copse-wood; while in the distant perspective, the noble woods and plantations of the duke of Argyle, covering

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the ground to a vast extent from the plain to the summits of the mountains, bounded the horizon.

After lingering for some time to enjoy the grand and beautiful objects which presented themselves to her view, under such happy combinations, Mrs. Frazer resolved to fit up this neglected attic as a small library, if it could be done without great expence; and, on consulting her coadjutor, the village wright, she found that a sufficiency of materials remained to complete her project.

When, in opposition to captain Frazer's opinion of its impracticability, she commenced her plan of improvement, she obtained his promise, in conformity with the old Scotch adage, that "*fools and bairns should not see half-done things,*" not to visit the cottage till the repairs were finished.

The outline of the plan being completed, Mrs. Frazer requested honest Duncan Bain to point out to her a painter

ter who could put the finishing hand to his work, when he informed her that he acted in the threefold capacity of joiner, plasterer, and painter.

As elegance, united with economy, was an object Emily Fraser never lost sight of, she directed the different apartments to be painted in the plainest style.

The sober stone-coloured walls of the dining-parlour assimilated admirably with the shining liburnum tables, substantial chairs, and dark Turkey carpet, which constituted the chief of its furniture.

The saloon was the gayest apartment in this humble cottage. The walls, of the palest rose colour, were ornamented with a deep black border, to imitate velvet. A large marble slab, dug out from amongst a heap of rubbish, was fixed in a painted wooden frame, and placed between the windows, that now opened into what had once been a garden. Tastefully arranged on this table were some

some beautiful exotics, which the good-natured carpenter had procured from the gardener of a neighbouring proprietor, and which were multiplied and reflected by a large mirror, found in the lumber attic, that was disencumbered of its old-fashioned frame, and fixed in the opposite wall, where it reached from the ceiling to the floor, which was covered with humble green baize. From the package of furniture which had providentially been purchased at a broker's in the metropolis, two Grecian couches, a few light cane-bottomed chairs, and three rosewood tables, were selected, and so disposed as to produce a pleasing effect; while the light fell mellowed on the eye through the transparent muslin draperies that shaded the windows.

Here the glowing pictures of Claude Lorraine, or the highly-finished designs of Titian, would be looked for in vain; but many pleasing landscapes, and several sketches of the bold gigantic features

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of North American scenery, the productions of Emily's own elegant pencil, adorned the walls.

No articles but those of absolute utility found their way into the other apartments of this lowly habitation; yet they exhibited a picture of order and neatness that is frequently not to be found in the splendid mansions of wealth. But no part of this once-miserable dwelling had undergone so great a change as the lumber attic. The bare walls had been boarded and painted green. On each side of the window, in neat mahogany-coloured shelves, their small stock of books was arranged, consisting of a few valuable classics, some volumes of ancient and modern history, and a collection of the most approved works of our British essayists and poets. The projecting thatch was partly cut away, and the window enlarged, so that the eye could take in at once the noble prospect it commanded.

A curi-

A curiously-carved oak cabinet, apparently an heirloom of the family, graced one side of the apartment, while a sofa, seemingly of an equally-ancient date, placed opposite to the window, courted to reflection or repose. On a table in the middle of the room, were placed captain Frazer's writing-desk, a pair of globes, materials for drawing, and other appendages of a modern library.

The kitchen and servants' apartments were underneath the parlour and saloon; they were large, but not well suited for a small economical family. At present, however, Mrs. Frazer contented herself with causing them to be white-washed, well aired, and rendered salubrious by burning large fires.

The improvements completed within doors, she next turned her attention to the exterior of the building. The entrance was by a flight of four broad stone steps, through a large wide glass door,

door, which was now wholly incompatible with the contracted dimensions of the hall. Its place was therefore supplied by a Gothic porch, over which was twined the long-neglected honeysuckle and woodbine, which had fallen from the walls, and crept in wild luxuriance along the ground.

A rustic fence inclosed a portion of the table-ground on which the building stood, and which it was the intention of the fair projector to convert into a lawn. In the mean time it was furnished with a few rustic benches, so disposed as to command a view of the lively scene of activity on the beautiful estuary beneath, and the shaggy and broken sides of the rocks and mountains in the distant horizon.

These exterior alterations were all in unison with the humble heath-covered roof and greyish tinge of the mucaceous stone of which the cottage was built, and

and which derived its principal claim to attention from the picturesque situation in which it stood.

Her household consisted of Kenneth Frazer, the foster-brother of her husband, who had followed his fortunes in the army, and who, on the peace, had been discharged with a pension of sixpence a-day. While acting as their servant abroad, he had performed the office of valet, cook, butler, &c.; and on their return to Argyleshire, he prayed to be retained in the family; a request which was readily granted, as his well-tried fidelity had rendered him an object of attachment both to captain Frazer and his lady.

A smiling young damsel, the daughter of the village schoolmistress, had been hired to relieve Mrs. Frazer from the fatigue of nursing the infant Emily, and also occasionally to assist in household concerns. These, together with Carlo, who acted in the capacity of foot-

boy, made up the whole of the domestic establishment of captain Frazer.

It was a delightful morning in June when Emily, with one of her sweetest smiles, requested her husband to accompany her to the Cottage.

Malcolm readily complied with her request; but as she gayly tripped along, delighted in idea with the agreeable surprise she had in store for him, he reverted with pain to the necessity of condemning this fascinating being to a life of domestic drudgery amid these solitary wilds.

What a revolution took place in his feelings as Emily led him through the different apartments of the lately-dilapidated mansion of his fathers, now the abode of elegance and comfort. But the expression of pleasure portrayed in his countenance gave place to those of astonishment and delight, as, entering the library, he gazed on the magic change which had been effected on the once-

miserable

miserable attic; and rapturously pressing to his bosom the blooming magician, who stood smiling by his side, he blushed at the spirit of discontent in which he had lately indulged.

Dinner now awaited them in the parlour; it consisted chiefly of game, mountain mutton, and the delicious salmon with which Loch Fyne abounds.

A walk round the grounds in the immediate vicinity of the house, with the view of fixing on the most proper spot for a kitchen-garden, occupied the intervening hours till tea, which they partook in the saloon.

Charles, fatigued with the journey from Cairndow, was early sent to bed; and the little nursling being also quietly disposed off in her crib, Mrs. Frazer rejoined her husband, who had strolled out to the lawn, to contemplate a fine effect of moonlight on a projecting crag, imperfectly seen from the window.

Arm in arm they returned to the

house; and captain Frazer played several of his native airs on the clarinet, which Emily accompanied with her exquisitely-melodious voice.

After a day spent in conferring and receiving happiness, Emily retired to enjoy a night of calm and undisturbed repose.

This had been no day of display got up to produce effect; for each succeeding morn dawned on *Fairy Cottage*, as Malcolm denominated his elegant little dwelling, only to impart added comforts to its inmates.

In a few months the kitchen-garden afforded a plentiful supply of vegetables, the dairy furnished exquisite butter and cream, while a well-stocked poultry-yard added to the luxuries of the table.

But with all this attention to housewifery, Emily Frazer never indulged in that unbecoming negligence of dress which is too often engendered by a life of retirement. Her mornings were usually

ally spent apart from her husband; for, while she superintended her nursery, and directed her domestic arrangements, the sports or the business of the field generally kept him abroad till dinner. Then he met, not the domestic drudge his imagination had portrayed, but the elegant well-bred woman of fashion, whose amply-stored mind and frank vivacity rendered his evenings delightful.

Nor was the solitude of *Fairy Cottage* unbroken. Mr. M'Intire, the worthy pastor of Cairndow, sometimes enlivened their hospitable board with his presence, as well as a few of their more distant neighbours. They always received a hearty welcome, and no bustle reminded them that they were strangers.

November at length approached, with more than the usual severity of a Highland winter in its train; yet ennui found no entrance into the dwelling of Mal-

colm Frazer, for each season had its appropriate duties and amusements.

Eight years had been spent by this amiable and respectable couple in their elegant retreat, when Marion Ferguson became the mistress of Castle Frazer. Their small property was improved with the most judicious care, and for the three last years had been fully equivalent to their expenditure; so that captain Frazer's half-pay was, from that period, annually set aside, as a little hoard to assist in the education of their children.

Charles, who was an active, courageous boy, had made considerable progress in the classics, under the tuition of his father; while the little Emily afforded a fair promise that she would not disgrace her maternal instructress. Bouverie, their youngest hope, was an engaging child, and the general playmate of the whole household.

Blessed above the common lot of man, Malcolm Frazer felt nowhere so happy

as

as in his own domestic circle; yet he was no contemner of the pleasures of social intercourse. At Castle Frazer, however, he was not a familiar visitor, for the haughty and repulsive manners of sir Simon never failed to excite in his mind a feeling of contempt.

Nevertheless, as a matter of courtesy, he accepted Miss Janet Frazer's invitation to meet and welcome the new-married pair.

The warm interest he felt for lady Frazer, we have already seen, was mingled with commiseration, that one so young and amiable should have linked her fate with a being in every way unfitted to appreciate her value.

Captain Frazer was the first to follow the ladies to the drawing-room. On his entrance, Marion beckoned him to take a seat on the sofa, betwixt her and her sister.—"You have some concealed treasures, my dear sir, in this dreary wilderness, Helen informs me. When may I

expect the pleasure of seeing Mrs. Frazer and your sweet children?"

"My Emily has been hitherto a stranger at Castle Frazer," he rejoined, "for, in the estimation of my good old relative, no virtue, however exalted, can obliterate the stain of a southern origin. Now, however, she will hasten to claim an interest in the hearts of its fair inmates," Malcolm continued, gallantly kissing a hand of each of his lovely companions.

Helen Frazer vainly endeavoured to dispel the starting tear; it fell warm on the hand that grasped hers.—"I take shame to myself," said the charming girl, "for my seeming neglect of your interesting family; but the habitual languor of disease ill fitted me to contend with inveterate prejudice. Besides, I was never mistress here, otherwise the ridiculous farce of this evening had not been permitted."

"Gently, sweet cousin," he replied; "reflect

" reflect on the omnipotence of early habits and associations, and how dear to the heart of your aunt must be even the semblance of the 'days of other years,' now when the glory of the feudal age is departed for ever."

At this moment a burst of noisy merriment reached their ears from the hall. A bitter smile passed over the features of lady Frazer; for, in spite of all her efforts to repress a rising spirit of discontent, she could not avoid a comparison between the enlightened society which assembled around the social board at Glencross Cottage, and the present boisterous, unpolished associates of her husband.

The expression of her countenance passed not unnoticed by captain Frazer, who, willing to save her gentle bosom a present pang, arose and rejoined his half-inebriated clansmen in the dining-hall.

In the name of the ladies, he challenged them to relinquish the bottle for the tea-

table, and succeeded, in spite of the ancient law of Highland hospitality, which enjoins that the strongest head shall remain victor over his prostrate companions.

Tea, coffee, and games of chance, occupied the hours till supper; when, to the astonishment of aunt Janet, trays were brought in, loaded, it is true, with more substantial food than modern fashion warrants, but still, in her estimation, a miserable substitute for this meal among the ancient Caledonians.

She beckoned her nephew to approach; and lady Frazer heard the words, "*Lawland meanness, assurance,*" and others of a similar import, which convinced her that this trifling innovation, planned by her to supersede the intoxication which she understood never failed to conclude the evening repast, had given high offence to the aged spinstress.

The gloom of discontent which began to overspread the features of sir Simon,

as aunt Janet proceeded with her philippic, passed not unobserved by the quick eye of Marion; but, determined not so easily to relinquish what she deemed an essential improvement, she called forth all her powers of fascination to entertain her guests.

The family piper, stationed in the vestibule, drew from his national instrument the finest strains; while her ladyship went from table to table, urging, with genuine hospitality, her husband's friends to partake of the luxuries liberally spread before them.

The trays being at length removed, Marion placed herself by the side of the most aged of her clansmen, when the sound of the bagpipe ceased, and was succeeded by her full-toned melodious voice, which filled the apartment, as she warbled some of the most popular Highland airs, with a pathos and expression that found their way to the hearts of her delighted hearers.

Her triumph was complete over long-cherished prejudice in the breasts of all save one; for, as the gratified sir Simon took his station behind the chair of the lovely siren, and whispered her to favour him with the "*Highland Laddie*," his aunt, with a scowl that would have transfixed, had it been possible, the youthful wife, retreated to her own chamber, there to brood over what she deemed the fallen greatness of the ancient house of Frazer of that Ilk.

The dining-hall had been, by lady Frazer's direction, lighted up during the time of supper; and the renewed strains of the bagpipe were the signal for her to challenge captain Frazer and another young cousin to join her in a Highland reel. On this, however, her aged companion started up, declaring, that to him of right belonged the honour of leading out sir Simon's lady.—"And though more than seventy summers have snowed my head," he facetiously added, "this arm shall de-

fend

fend the enviable privilege against any stripling intruder who dare attempt to invade it."

Marion gave her hand to the gallant old man; and as they gayly kept time to the merry Strathspey, the snowy locks which shaded his fine forehead alone bore testimony that he had indeed passed the meridian of his days.

Successively she became the partner of the numerous guests; and reels and Strathspeys continued till the lowering eyelids of many of the party evinced an inclination for repose.

Fatigued with the exertions of the evening, the lovely sisters bade each other good-night at the door of the hall, and lady Frazer immediately sought the solitude of her own dressing-room.

At an early hour the following morning the table of the great hall was covered with a plentiful breakfast, to which the guests did ample justice. Speedily afterwards they prepared to depart to their respective

respective habitations, highly delighted with the new mistress of Castle Frazer.

On approaching to take leave of his fair hostess, captain Frazer was reminded by her of his promise to make Mrs. Frazer the companion of his next visit to the Castle—a promise he willingly reiterated.

Scarcely had sir Simon lost sight of the last of his clansmen before he mounted his horse, and left the sisters to the enjoyment of uninterrupted quiet for the rest of the morning; for aunt Janet had retired to pour into the ear of her obsequious attendant, Maud Johnstone, the inveterate malice she fostered against the amiable and unoffending wife of her nephew.

CHAP-

CHAPTER VIII.

——— He smote me, and I did not weep,
But curs'd him in my heart. BYRON.

.....

Now wae to thee, thou cruel lord,
A bluidy man I trow thou be,
For mony a heart thou hast made sair,
That ne'er did wrang to thine nor thee.
BURNS.

THE glow of pleasure which mantled the cheeks of Helen Frazer, on her reunion with her early and only friend, had this morning given place to the pallid hue of disease, which filled the affectionate bosom of lady Frazer with the most alarming fears for her safety. In vain, however, she urged her to have recourse to medical advice. Helen declared she had no complaint but a sense of

of languor and debility, which she hoped would yield to her enlivening society; but the deep-drawn sigh evinced how feeble, in reality, were those hopes with which she wished to inspire her friend.

After an hour spent in all the delights of friendly conversation, Helen arose, and invited Marion to take a view of the improvements and alterations which had been made in Castle Fraser for her reception — "Alterations which," she added, "had nearly deprived aunt Janet of her senses."

The vestibule, or entrance-hall, was in the form of a crescent. On the left hand opened the great dining-hall, already mentioned; and on the right a similar apartment, which, in feudal days, had evidently been employed as a guard-room. For many years it had been shut up, or only used as a receptacle for lumber, until it was converted, under the direction of Helen, into the elegant drawing-

drawing-room, in which, on the evening before, she pressed to her heart the sister of her affections.

Her correct taste pointed out the incongruity of disfiguring the severe old Gothic front of the building by airy modern virandas. Venetian blinds, therefore, descending from the top of the narrow peaked windows, screened the alterations within from the eye of those who approached the front entrance of the mansion; while the windows of the great hall, on the opposite side, were furnished with similar blinds, for the sake of uniformity. The recesses into which these windows had been sunk were filled up, the dark wainscotting removed, and the immense chimney contracted to the size of a modern fireplace.

The thickness of the walls could not be obviated; but, as far as possible to remedy this defect, two large airy balconies were opened in that side of the room,

room, at right angles with the former windows, and looked into a court, surrounded with a high parapet wall, where, in times of feudal discord, the watchful sentinel had oft paced his nightly rounds, but which in many places was fallen into complete decay. This wall was now levelled with the ground, and a sloping lawn formed in front of the windows, bordered on the right by a shrubbery, so laid out as effectually to conceal it from the road when the trees and shrubs should have attained maturity. The interior of this apartment was elegantly finished; and nothing which taste could approve was wanting to its decoration. Some of the finest pictures of Salvator Rosa, highly appropriate to the wild scenery without, ornamented its walls. A splendid harp stood in a corner; literary journals and daily newspapers, which in modern times form a link of communication between the inhabitants of the most remote wilds and the

the *living world*, lay scattered on the tables, while lighter works of approved merit were to be found in splendid Indian cabinets, placed in recesses in different parts of the walls.

Pale green silk draperies excluded, at pleasure, the glare of the meridian sun, or finely-coloured alabaster lamps imitated the mildness of twilight. A cut-glass chandelier, suspended from the ceiling, when lighted up, imparted a brilliancy to the whole, which it is impossible to describe.

The other apartments on this side of the Castle consisted of a family dining-room and breakfast-parlour.

In the alteration of these chambers, convenience rather than taste had been consulted. The oak pannels were painted of a cerulean blue, bordered with mahogany colour; the immense chimneys contracted, and the narrow windows enlarged, so as to admit of a sufficiency

ciency of daylight. Modern furniture supplanted the heirlooms which formerly graced these apartments, but of so substantial a kind as not to appear incongruous with the heavy style of the finishing.

A wide stone staircase, fronting the entrance-door, led to the chambers above; on the left, a bedchamber and dressing-room had, like those below, been modernized and new-furnished for the reception of lady Frazer. Adjoining those apartments was another occupied by Helen, within which was a closet that served the double purpose of her dressing-room and library, being well stored with a good collection of French and English authors.

In former times, a library was by no means a necessary appendage in the establishment of a Highland chieftain; and sir Simon, conjoining in his character the most unbounded licentiousness with

with extreme parsimony, shrunk from every expence which could in no way contribute to his own gratification.

In a closet within her brother's bedroom a few old black-letter volumes on heraldry, some antiquated works of devotion, a History of the Rebellions of Fifteen and Forty-five, and M'Dougal's Scottish Peerage, stood side by side, with a few modern plays, novels, scandalous chronicles of living characters, and volumes of caricatures, which set decency and good taste equally at defiance.

Delicacy required that Helen should exercise her censorial authority in the expurgation of this disgraceful trash; but no rhetoric she was mistress of could induce her brother to furnish a library suitable to his rank and fortune, and which, she much feared, would in a short time prove the only source of amusement and consolation to her enlightened friend.

Having terminated the survey of the various

various improvements, and projected others both within and without doors, the amiable friends retired to the dressing-room of lady Frazer.

"How happens it, Helen," she said, "with all our good aunt's devotion to feudal customs, and sir Simon's leaning towards the same direction, that the vassals of the house of Frazer have not been feasted, according to ancient custom, on the marriage of their chief? Is the picture of the days that are gone by, when bands of clansmen repaid with devoted attachment and veneration the hospitality and protection of a powerful chieftain, only to be found in the pages of fiction? Do, in reality, the Highland clans form no exception to the axiom, that ignorance and wretchedness are the never-failing concomitant of slavery, in whatever form it rears its detested head?"

Marion raised her eyes to the face of her friend, in expectation of an answer; but the varying colour of her cheek

evinced

evinced that she had struck a jarring chord, and that at Castle Frazer at least the sway of the chief was not softened by the affection of the parent.

The necessity of reply was, however, superseded by the abrupt entrance of the baronet, whose heightened colour and disordered countenance declared that all was not at peace within.

"Marion has been expressing her surprise," said the gentle Helen, with a sickly smile, that might have found its way to the most obdurate heart, "that aunt Janet, with all her veneration for ancient usages and customs, 'caused not the feast to be spread in the hall, that the hearts of your people might have rejoiced in your joy."

"*Curse them!*" muttered within his clenched teeth, reached the ears of the astonished sisters, as sir Simon, with a face inflamed by rage, strode out of the apartment.

A mixed

A mixed feeling of indignation and contempt pervaded the bosom of lady Frazer at such unjustifiable violence; but when she turned her eyes on the pale agitated countenance of her friend, her heart softened, and in silence they mingled their tears together.

Before leaving Castle Frazer to become the husband of the ill-fated Marion Ferguson, sir Simon had cast his eye on a pretty wench, the daughter of one of his vassals. No sooner, therefore, was he mounted than he turned his horse's head to the humble dwelling of Neil M'Coy. Entering, he beheld the blooming Peggy busied in preparing the frugal repast against the return of her father from the labours of the field. On observing their chief, the bashful girl dropped an awkward curtsey, and stammered out something about running to tell her father that his honour wanted to speak with him; but impeding her progress,

he

he began to praise her beauty, and inquired if she would not wish to leave off such drudgery and become a lady?

The youthful rustic did not comprehend the tendency of his flattering speeches; but her inborn modesty shrunk from his libertine gaze, and once more she attempted to leave the cottage.

He caught her, however, in his arms before she gained the door, and was proceeding to greater liberties, when the loud shrieks of Peggy reached the ears of her father in an adjoining field.

Throwing down the implements of his labour, he flew to the house, and seizing the intruder with a powerful grasp, he swung him to the farthest corner of the cottage, before recognizing either his rank or person.

This knowledge made no difference, however, in the feelings of the enraged father; for he would, to use his own expression, have defended his dear Peggy, the

"best beloved lamb of his fold, from the assault of a *prince of the blood royal*."

But Neil M'Coy, though a courageous, was a prudent man; he therefore listened with seeming credence to the turn the crafty baronet chose to give to the affair, by representing the whole as a jest, and laughing at the terrors of the pretty simpleton.

The cottager, in his turn, but with more sincerity, declared, that in his haste to succour his child, he had not even taken time to look at his honour, otherwise he must indeed have supposed the whole proceeded from the foolish terrors of his Peggy, unaccustomed as she was to the notice of her superiors.

With a smiling countenance, but a heart brooding over revenge, sir Simon remounted his steed, and returned to the Castle in a frame of mind not easily to be described, and which produced that sally of passion which imparted so keen a pang

a pang to the bosoms of the amiable sisters.

Neil M'Coy was not, however, to be deceived by the seeming calm. He was fully aware that his present abode would no longer prove a safe shelter for himself or his family. He therefore made hasty arrangements with an old comrade to take the cottage off his hand; and the next morning's sun arose on him and the blooming Peggy, with her two younger brothers, far beyond the domains of Castle Fraser.

This honest cottager had weathered many a hard campaign in America, and on the declaration of independence, returned to his native glen, with a wife and infant daughter. For seven years they dwelt in humble contentment; but at the end of that period, his beloved partner, at the moment of giving birth to twin boys, breathed her last.

The endearments of the youthful Peggy were a rich source of consolation to

the bereaved husband under this trying affliction; and as she grew up, she supplied, by industry and care, the place of his deceased wife, and proved a kind mother to her infant brothers.

In the neighbourhood of Ardkinlass lived the respectable colonel Campbell, under whose command Neil M'Coy had combated in the new world. Leaving his children and humble baggage at the village, our soldier presented himself at the gate of the worthy veteran, and gained a ready admittance.

His discharge, and the character given of him by the colonel himself, on his leaving the regiment, were wrapped up in several folds of paper, and carefully deposited in his tobacco-fob, when he set out on this journey. These he now presented to his former commander, and then related his simple tale of suffering.

Colonel Campbell was no stranger to the well-tried worth of M'Coy, nor was he wholly unacquainted with the tyran-

nical

nical acts which had often stained the character of sir Simon Frazer. An old porter, who had grown grey in the service of his family, lay without hope of recovery; and the colonel knew no one more worthy to succeed him than the houseless wanderer before him. The grateful Highlander was therefore instantly installed in his new office, and the very same evening quietly settled in the lodge of Ardkinlass.

Great reason had he ever after to rejoice at his well-timed and prompt retreat; for sir Simon, on leaving the ladies, as already described, sent off a servant to order the immediate attendance of his steward.

At dinner he appeared gloomy and abstracted, and took no part in the conversation, which was supported by the females with a languor which shewed that their heart was not in the subject.

The wine was scarcely placed on the table, when Bruce made his appearance.

Being by the maternal side a *fortieth* or *fiftieth* cousin of the family, he enjoyed the enviable privilege of taking a seat at the table of his chief—a privilege of which he availed himself with a degree of freedom that appeared rather surprising, when his relative situation was taken into account—but which, however, received no check from the haughty master of the mansion.

The ladies immediately retired on his appearance; and even aunt Janet condescended to express her fears that something was not right, for she too had noticed the disturbed looks of her nephew.

At the termination of a couple of hours, sir Simon entered the drawing-room alone. An air of satisfaction appeared on his face; and approaching lady Frazer and his sister, he gallantly apologized for his abruptness in the morning.

"Really," said he, "your ladyship, accustomed to the civility of your brother's tenantry, can form no conception

of

of the insolence and stupidity I have to encounter among my rude clansmen; but I have delegated the affair in question to one better able to cope with their obstinacy than I am, and hastened to offer my devotion at the shrine of beauty and taste."

Lady Fraser received this apology with a smile of pleasure; for mere infirmity of temper she could pardon, and she suspected not that in the present instance the change she witnessed proceeded from the hope of gratified revenge.

Music, conversation, and a quiet rubber at whist, filled up the interval till supper, more pleasantly than the clouded morning portended; and at an early hour the little family party, all but sir Simon, retired to enjoy the sweets of sound repose.

On this night his couch of down proved a bed of thorns. Stung by the indignity of a vassal's blow, however justly inflicted,

flicted, his gloomy soul could find no peace but in the hope of inflicting a speedy and signal revenge.

The time, it is true, was gone by, when the chieftain could, at his own pleasure, condemn to death an unoffending vassal; but many were still the avenues by which the iron hand of oppression could crush to the dust the unfortunate victim of his displeasure.

Archibald Bruce, the steward of sir Simon, was the ready tool of the most lawless oppression; and on the present occasion to him was delegated the task of inflicting a signal vengeance on Neil M'Coy and his unoffending offspring.

At an hour earlier than usual, the gate bell of Castle Frazer was rung with a violence that alarmed its inmates.

The baronet sprung from his restless couch, and hastened to inquire the cause of such an early intrusion, when he learned, with dismay, that a fire had broke out in the night, and consumed several

several of his cottages; and as the wind was high, fears were entertained that the whole of the little hamlet would share a similar fate.

Frantic with rage, he instantly ordered the house servants to proceed without delay and assist in quelling the flames. He then mounted his own steed, and was galloping to the village, when he met a boy, bearing a line from Bruce, informing him that all danger of the farther progress of the flames was happily over; and that as soon as he could leave the scene of action, he would communicate to him more particularly the extent of the disaster.

On his return to the Castle, he found the females of his family assembled in the breakfast-parlour. The sisters felt a lively interest in the fate of the unfortunate sufferers; and even aunt Janet was not wholly unmoved by their distress.

Almost immediately the steward made his appearance. Six of the humble dwell-

ings of industry were consumed. The fire began in the cottage of Neil M'Coy; but no one could form any idea how it originated, for the old man and his three children had perished in the flames.

A livid paleness overspread the face of sir Simon at this part of the narrative; and starting up, he rushed from the apartment.

The pure mind of lady Frazer was wholly incapable of conceiving the most remote suspicion of her husband's guilty conduct in this affair; and she felt a thrill of satisfaction pervade her bosom, on witnessing what she regarded as a proof of a heart not wholly dead to the miseries of his fellow-creatures.

Not so easily deceived was aunt Janet; she saw in the perturbed countenance of her darling nephew the workings of a guilty conscience, and almost persuaded herself, that in some way or other he had been the cause of the disastrous events of the last night.

In

In the mean time, the conscience-stricken sir Simon had sought the solitude of a remote chamber, which he paced in a state of mind that his bitterest enemies might have commiserated. An adept, however, at self-deceit, he soon applied the "flattering unction to his soul." He was no intentional murderer; smarting under a vassal's blow, and deprived of the power held by his ancestors, of executing summary vengeance on the offender, he had resorted to the only means left him of punishing the audacious slave who had dared to lift his hand against his chief. That the infliction had been heavier, and the mischief more widely extended, than was his intention, could not be imputed to him as a crime. Had not he himself been a considerable loser?

By such fallacious reasoning did this wretched man endeavour to reconcile to himself an action at which humanity shuddered; yet he was aware, that if

known, it would drive him forth from society, like Cain of old, a wretched wanderer for "the finger of scorn to point at."

But no one was privy to the affair, except the willing instrument of all his oppressions, and he, for his own sake, must be equally anxious to guard the secret. Still the increasing familiarity of this minion became hourly more galling to his haughty patron, clearly evincing, that the vicious man is the veriest slave in nature, however he may burnish his chains.

CHAP.

CHAPTER IX.

Guilt is the source of sorrow; 'tis the fiend,
The avenging fiend, that follows us behind
With whips and stings. *Fair Penitent.*

. . . . . .

——————— Her thoughts
Were combinations of disjointed things;
And forms impalpable, and unperceived
Of others sight, familiar were to hers:
And this the world calls frenzy. BYRON.

WHEN sir Simon returned to the parlour, Marion had begun to pour out the coffee; but suspending her employment for a moment, she beckoned him, with one of her most bewitching smiles, to take a vacant chair by her side.

With feverish haste he obeyed the sweet summoner; but his heart at the moment whispered that he was unworthy of the affection of this exalted being.

During

During his absence, a discussion had taken place respecting the most effectual mode of relieving the sufferers. Aunt Janet proposed that they should be temporarily accommodated in some of the offices adjoining the Castle; but to this the steward objected, under the plea that they would be better on the spot, employed in endeavouring to recover any part of their scanty property which might have escaped the devouring flames, but in reality from the dread lest any surmises of the truth should find their way to the household.

When alone with sir Simon, he regretted that any of the Castle servants should have been dispatched to the village, as strange ideas, he was afraid, were afloat respecting the cause of the fire. The baronet was in no humour to brook advice, far less implied censure from a dependant. With a withering look he therefore silenced the loquacity of Bruce, and proceeded to give directions for rebuilding

building the cottages with all convenient speed.

On the rubbish being removed, no vestiges of the bodies of the unfortunate M'Coy or his family were to be found. The neighbours sincerely mourned his loss, for he was well beloved among them; and the confidant of his flight confined the secret to his own bosom, from a dread of offending his tyrannical master.

The bounty of the ladies more than compensated the sufferers for their losses; and in a short time the affair was forgotten by all except the baronet, who at times felt strange misgivings respecting the fate of the M'Coys.

He could scarcely believe, had the whole family perished in the flames, but that some of their remains, however mutilated, must have been discovered. Yet it was next to impossible, in the short period which elapsed from the time of his discomfiture by the cottager till the commencement of the conflagration, that

that he could have so completely secreted himself from the knowledge of all his neighbours. Besides, had he not thrown him wholly off his guard, by pretending to accept his apology? It would then be absurd to suppose that he would fly from an evil that he knew not menaced him.

To the restless disquietude of the baronet respecting M'Coy, another source of vexation was shortly afterwards added. A letter was brought to him one morning from Mr. Glen, stating that Bertha, since her casual meeting with sir Simon in the vale of Kinlass, was more unsettled in her mind than she had been for many previous months; and that, notwithstanding the most vigilant attention, she had found means to escape, without leaving the slightest clue by which to trace her footsteps. Under these circumstances he deemed it his duty, he added, to apprise the baronet of her flight, as it was by no means improbable

ble that she might find her way to the Castle.

The livid hue of sir Simon's countenance bespoke his dismay at this unwelcome intelligence; but instead of turning his reproaches inward, he execrated the carelessness of the pastor for suffering his charge to escape.

Eagerly had he quaffed the cup of selfish pleasure, but in the end found it bitter as gall and wormwood. The comforts of wealth, the delights of domestic affection, the smiles of youth, beauty, and innocence, all courted his acceptance, yet had he rejected the offered boon.

Wandering forth, unblessing and unblessed, his eye glanced fearfully over surrounding objects, for every moment he expected to behold the form of the injured Bertha. He started at every sound, for her voice seemed borne on the passing breeze. Yet it was not remorse, but the dread of detection, which corroded

corroded his bosom; for his haughty spirit shrunk from the contempt that he too well knew would follow the exposure of his guilt.

Heedless of the lapse of time, he had strolled several miles from the Castle, when the sound of voices in cheerful converse struck on his ear. He would have retreated, for he held no communion with happiness, but a sudden turn in the road placed him full in view of captain Malcolm Frazer and his lady, who were on their way to Castle Frazer.

Making a virtue of necessity, he expressed his joy at the meeting, and gallantly offered to become Mrs. Frazer's running footman; on which the captain dismounted, and giving his horse to Carlo, walked by his side.

The sensible conversation and lively sallies of this amiable couple insensibly beguiled sir Simon of his disquiet; and before he reached home, Bertha and M'Coy were for a while forgotten.

Mrs.

Mrs. Frazer received a friendly welcome from the sisters, who were highly prepossessed in her favour, even at first sight. Though past the meridian of life, she might still be termed a fine woman; but it was neither her beauty nor grace which rivetted the esteem of the beholder; it was a countenance beaming with the purest benevolence; an eye glistening with tenderness, or sparkling with delight; and a certain sweetness and simplicity of manner, which gave an interest to all she said or did. Mrs. Frazer burst not on the eye like a deceitful meteor, which dazzles for a moment and disappears for ever, but stole on the senses like the cheerful dawn, delighting and vivifying the face of nature.

The pressing invitation of lady Frazer, that she would protract her visit until next day, as the roads were too bad to admit of travelling under night, she resisted, with a sweet smile observing,

ing, that she had pledged herself to her nursery to return before dinner.—"And that is a quarter," she added, "in which I make a point of never breaking a promise."

The look of confiding affection which captain Frazer turned upon her at this moment, as he arose to take leave, declared that they were more than husband and wife—that they were friends to each other.

Emily, in her turn, was equally pleased with the sisters; but she concurred with her Malcolm in deploring that the fascinating Marion Ferguson should have joined her fate with that of a man so incapable of appreciating her value.

Twilight had succeeded to a short wintry day before they came in sight of their own fairy dwelling, when Carlo, whose infant mind had been imbued with the idea of ghosts, rode up to the side of his master, and in a voice of terror pointed out to him a figure clothed

in

in white, reclining at the foot of a tree, which his disordered fancy represented as a frightful apparition.

Ever alive to the calls of humanity, captain and Mrs. Frazer pushed forward their horses, and soon reached the object of his terrors. She was a young female, whose fantastic habiliments bespoke the disorder of her mind. A torn white muslin robe enveloped a form almost wasted to a shadow: the shades of death appeared already to overspread her countenance; one hand supported her head, while with the other she confined the tattered remnant of what had once been a velvet mantle over her bosom.

Shocked at a spectacle so melancholy, our humane travellers alighted, and endeavoured to raise the unfortunate object from the ground. She continued to breathe; but her limbs were so stiff and benumbed with the cold, that they refused to support their fragile burden.

They were still three quarters of a mile

mile from home, but she was carefully placed on the horse before Carlo, who, now that he was convinced she was no direful apparition, was equally anxious as his master and mistress to afford her every aid in his power.

Ere they reached the Cottage, the motion of the horse partly revived her. She opened her eyes, and staring wildly on her companions, uttered in a feeble voice the name of "Bertha! We are going to seek Bertha," and again her head sunk on her breast; and during the remainder of the way, she exhibited no signs of existence.

On arriving at home, the unfortunate stranger was immediately stripped of her wet and half-frozen habiliments; light nourishment was cautiously administered to her; and being placed in a comfortable bed, her humane hostess had the satisfaction to behold her sink into a calm slumber.

The evening of this day was a jubilee

at

at Fairy Cottage. The diurnal tasks of Charles and Emily were executed so as to call forth the praises of the gratified parents; while the infant Beauvenie frolicked about in an ecstacy of joy at again beholding papa and mamma.

Before retiring for the night, the benevolent couple visited the couch of the hapless invalid. She still continued in a quiet sleep, and they trusted that in the morning she might be so far recovered as to afford that information which would enable them to apprise her friends of her safety.

In this hope, however, they were disappointed. The patient slept till a late hour, and awoke much recruited in bodily strength; but not even a casual ray of intelligence burst through the cloud that obscured her mind.

"Bertha! Let us go and seek Bertha!" were the only words she uttered.

For the present, therefore, her kind protectors could only cause her to be

carefully

carefully attended; and in the hope that her friends might direct their search in that quarter, they wrote an account of the circumstance to Mr. M'Intire at Cairndow.

Days and weeks, however, passed away, and no one appeared to claim the unfortunate maniac. The gentleness of her manner, and the mournful tone in which she frequently repeated—"Let us go and seek Bertha," deeply affected every inmate of the Cottage; and they vied with each other in anticipating her little wants.

A heavy fall of snow had prevented lady Frazer and Helen from returning Mrs. Frazer's visit, and indeed cut off almost entirely the communication between Fairy Cottage and the Castle.

During this interval the stranger had so far recovered as to be able to leave her bed, when one morning, unexpectedly entering the parlour where Emily was at work, she took up a half-finished frock

of

of Bouverie's, and began to ply her needle with great dexterity. The child soon after ran into the room, when catching him in her arms, with a convulsive laugh, she exclaimed—"Have I found you, my dear, dear Bertha!"

Unwilling to destroy an illusion which seemed to afford the unhappy girl so much delight, no effort was made to convince her of her error; and from that moment she became the playmate and attendant of the engaging boy, who, in his turn, was delighted to please the sick lady.

About two months after the stranger had been domesticated at Fairy Cottage, a wild shriek drew captain Frazer and his lady to the porch, where, a few minutes before, they had left her making sails to a mimic vessel which had been given to Bouverie, who was anxiously watching the progress of her work.

The first object which met their eye was sir Simon Frazer, transfixed as it

were to the spot, gazing on the poor maniac, who, apparently lifeless, lay stretched at his feet.

Every means that anxiety could devise were resorted to by Mrs. Frazer and the old village nurse, who happened to be in the house, in order to restore animation; but it was long before the unfortunate object of their care began to shew signs of life. Having assisted to place her in bed, Mrs. Frazer left her to the care of nurse, and joined the gentlemen in the parlour.

"Sir Simon, my dear," said captain Frazer, as she entered, "has been giving me the history of our unhappy charge. She was the daughter of an old steward of sir William's, and having been decoyed from home, returned after many months in the condition you now see her, with a dead infant in her arms. A youth who was suspected of harbouring an attachment to her from a very early period of their existence found her

her on the heath, about a mile from her father's dwelling, to which he conveyed her; but the shock proved too much for the old man, and in a few weeks afterwards he paid the debt of nature.

"Left without any natural guardian, Bertha Campbell was, by sir Simon, placed with the widow of a minister, where she has remained ever since, until about ten days before you rescued her from an untimely grave. A letter from Mrs. Glen informed him of her having about that time strayed from the house without leaving any clue to trace her steps; and, in consequence, a search, by his orders, was made for her in every direction."

"Now, however," interposed the baronet, "since I have discovered her retreat, I shall take immediate measures to relieve you from so troublesome an inmate."

"By no means," replied Mrs. Frazer, with quickness; "I should, sir Simon,

regard myself in the light of a murderer, were I to allow the poor suffering Bertha to be removed from underneath my roof in her present enfeebled state, during the continuance of this inclement weather."

Sir Simon, though inwardly execrating Mrs. Frazer's officious zeal, was too polite to oppose her determination. Complimenting her, therefore, on her humanity, he merely said that he would relieve Mrs. Glen's anxiety, by informing her that Bertha had found a safe asylum for the present; and immediately turned the conversation on indifferent subjects.

"I was sent a-pioneering this morning by the fair ladies of the Castle," said he, "to reconnoitre the state of the roads, as they are impatient to pay their respects at Fairy Cottage. I am afraid, however, they must restrain their impatience a little longer, for they are truly in a wretched state."

"Not in our immediate neighbourhood,"

hood," rejoined Mrs. Frazer, "for the fine warm sunshine of yesterday tempted Malcolm and me abroad, and we rode as far as Cairndow without the smallest inconvenience."

"You are a fearless horsewoman, Emily," observed her husband; "besides, on the high grounds, the snow and ice remain longer than in the more immediate vicinity of the loch."

After partaking of some slight refreshment, the baronet rose to depart. In a hesitating manner he entreated Mrs. Frazer not to reveal to lady Frazer or his sister her meeting with Bertha.—"She was Helen's playfellow in infancy," he added, "and her unhappy fate affected her greatly at the time it happened; and the renewed agitation which a knowledge of her present situation would occasion, might prove extremely hurtful in her present weak state."

Mrs. Frazer acquiesced in his prudent caution; and Malcolm having promised

to write to him if any material change took place in their fair patient, sir Simon took his leave, secretly praying that the unfortunate victim of his baseness might soon be beyond the power of revealing his guilt.

As he rode homeward, he cursed his own folly, for not having from the beginning placed Bertha in a receptacle for maniacs in the metropolis, where her ravings would have passed unheeded; and he resolved that such should be her future abode, as soon as she was able to be removed from the house of his kinsman.

In the mean time the unhappy girl had fallen into a disturbed dose. As usual, she frequently uttered the name of "Bertha," and in piercing accents entreated sir Simon, as if he had been present, to restore her to her arms. Sometimes she accused herself as the murderer of her aged parent, whose angry shade her disordered fancy pictured

as

as standing by her bedside; at others, a low moaning was the only indication she gave of existence.

Captain Frazer dispatched a messenger for the village surgeon, who arrived in the afternoon. He was a shrewd intelligent man, and on being informed how she was first seized, justly conjectured that the baronet had himself been her seducer.

"I like not the baronet," said Malcolm to his Emily, as, seated alone after the departure of the surgeon, they were lamenting the fate of Bertha Campbell. "Her father was a trusty steward to sir William Frazer; and I much fear his long and faithful services met an ungrateful return from the son; for, if I mistake not, to him the poor unfortunate Bertha owes her ruin."

The pure mind of Mrs. Frazer recoiled with horror at the bare idea of such complicated villainy; and she would have

entreated the captain to relinquish all intercourse with one so undeserving, had not the image of the youthful Marion arisen to prevent the request which hovered on her lips.—"United to such a partner, long it could not be until she might require the soothings of friendship to sustain her sinking spirits; and shall I, by being 'righteous over much,' deprive myself of the power of endeavouring to lighten the sorrows of this angelic woman? Besides, what right have I to condemn any human being on vague surmises? what right——"

Her reverie was here disturbed by Malcolm playfully tapping her on the cheek, and inquiring the reason of her unusual gravity?

Her thoughts were always open to the inspection of her best, her dearest friend, and met, in the present instance, with his most cordial approbation.

"Helen, besides, seems to me to be fast

fast verging to the grave; and then will lady Frazer be desolate indeed—then will your friendship, my Emily, be to her a treasure beyond all price."

CHAPTER X.

What tragic tears bedew the eye!
What deaths we suffer ere we die!
Our broken friendships we deplore,
And loves of youth that are no more! LOGAN.

OUR benevolent couple were greatly shocked, on the following morning, to learn that their suffering guest had, throughout the night, exhibited symptoms of the wildest delirium.

With the utmost anxiety they awaited the visit of the surgeon, who did not arrive till noon. He was accompanied by their worthy friend Mr. M'Intire; and both gentlemen came with the professed purpose of spending the day at the Cottage.

The prompt means employed for her relief produced the happiest effect. The sufferer,

sufferer, in less than an hour, sank into sleep; but her breathing was so faint, that all but the surgeon dreaded that she had closed her eyes for ever.

Towards evening, however, she awoke calm and composed, but so feeble, that she could not even raise her head from the pillow without assistance. Nevertheless her eyes beamed with a look of intelligence, which her humane hostess had never observed since she became an inmate of her dwelling.

Quiet and rest had been strictly enjoined by the professional attendant before his departure; and Mrs. Frazer, in conformity with this injunction, after administering the evening dose of her medicine, left her under the care of old nurse, who was to watch by her during the night.

Her sleep was long and profound; and when she awoke, towards the morning, her first inquiry was for Mrs. Glen.

Nurse, as agreed upon, merely replied

that she had been removed nearer to Cairndow for the benefit of medical advice, but would return to Mrs. Glen as soon as she was able.

Apparently satisfied with this explanation, she once more fell into a profound slumber, which lasted till day began to decline.

Mrs. Frazer was instantly by her bedside. Taking her burning hand, she inquired, in the gentlest accents, how she found herself?

The invalid, with a languid smile, replied—" To your kindness, madam, I owe returning reason; but, alas! when you know the wretch on whom you have lavished so much care, even your gentle nature will recoil from the guilty Bertha. But——"

" Hush," replied her compassionate auditor; " from my severity you have nothing to fear. Already am I partly acquainted with your sad story, unfortunate child of sorrow. You are yet young;

young; and I trust that time, and the soothings of friendship, may restore some portion of peace to your desolate heart. At present, however, all efforts must be directed towards your recovery; rest and quiet have been enjoined as the chief means. How blameable am I, therefore, in allowing you to converse even for this short period!" and gently pressing the hand of the exhausted patient, she closed the curtains and retired.

At his next visit the surgeon found his patient free from pain. Her fever had subsided, but a weak vacillating pulse, and the ominous brilliancy of her eyes, convinced him that her sorrows, with her life, were fast hastening to a close.

He mentioned his opinion to her benevolent protectors; and Mrs. Frazer, anxious to ascertain if ought was in her power to soften the last moments of the dying

dying penitent, resolved no longer to repress her wish to converse.

When she next entered her room, Bertha had been lifted from her bed to a couch placed by the fire. One hand supported her head, while the other hung listlessly over the side of the couch. Her visage was pale as the drooping snowdrop; and from between her closed eyelids the big tear rolled down her wan cheeks.

Mrs. Frazer hung over her with the tenderest sympathy; she placed herself by her side, and spoke to her in the most soothing strain, inquiring whether she would wish to see any of her friends?

With a heart-rending sigh Bertha replied—"Alas, madam! a wretched outcast like me has no friends! yet, if my disordered imagination has not deceived me, Mrs. Glen has watched over me with the kindness of a mother. But I know not where I am; nor would I wish further

further to encroach on the humanity of strangers, else my most ardent wish is to embrace that venerable woman before this scene closes on me for ever. She has a son, whose early prospects were blighted by my ingratitude and crimes. To obtain that son's forgiveness is the only boon I crave on this side the grave. But no—never can he forgive—never behold the guilty Bertha more!" and she clasped her hands in an agony of sorrow, which shook her feeble frame almost to dissolution.

Mrs. Frazer sought, by the tenderest solicitude, to calm her agitated spirits, and inquired where her friends resided.

Having gained this information, and seen her somewhat more composed, she joined her husband, to consult with him on the practicability of informing her friends of her situation.

On learning that Mrs. Glen resided only a few miles from Cairndow, captain Frazer lost not a moment in writing to Mr.

Mr. M'Intire, requesting him to forward to her intelligence of Bertha's present state, and her earnest desire to bid her a final adieu.

On the next day but one the worthy pastor arrived at the Cottage, accompanied by a stranger, whom he introduced by the name of Glen. His melancholy, and the ill health which his whole appearance indicated, would have interested the good captain and his lady, even had not his name proclaimed him to be the injured lover of Bertha.

To relieve him from a state of the most agonizing suspense, Mr. M'Intire immediately led to the subject nearest his heart, by inquiring after the patient.

With all the inherent delicacy of his nature, captain Frazer entered into a detail of the state in which he found the unhappy maniac, her subsequent interview with sir Simon Frazer, and the effect it produced on her health and intellect. He concluded by making known

to

to him the ardent desire she had expressed to receive his forgiveness, and once more behold his mother.

Vainly did the youth endeavour to repress his emotion during this recital. The heaving bosom, and the silent tears that coursed each other down cheeks sometimes of an ashy paleness, and at others flushed by indignation, betokened the mental conflict in his breast.

To relieve him from the embarrassing presence of a stranger, captain Frazer considerately left the room, saying he would seek his Emily, and consult with her on the safest mode of breaking his arrival to the invalid.

When, at the end of half an hour, he returned to the parlour, he found Mr. Glen, though sad, yet composed, and anxious to be introduced to the unhappy Bertha. Mrs. Frazer shortly after appeared. The tear still glistened in her eye, as she paid the customary compliments of welcome to the stranger;

after which she immediately led him to the door of the invalid's chamber, where she left him, as it had been the particular desire of Bertha that their first interview might pass without witnesses.

His hand rested on the lock; for a few moments he hesitated to advance. For two years he had tended the wanderings, and listened to the wild fantasies of the poor maniac; but now, when Reason had resumed her throne, when even his presence must remind her of broken promises and abused affection, he shrunk from inflicting an additional pang on her already-lacerated heart.

At length, with a kind of desperate courage, he threw open the door.—"My poor Bertha! my injured love!" burst consentaneously from their lips, as Glen sunk on his knees before the couch of the exhausted sufferer.

For some time tears were their only language; then slowly raising her sunken eyes,

eyes, and fixing them on the pale face of her former lover—"Forgive! oh, forgive," she faintly uttered, "the criminal Bertha!" and sunk back on the couch, deprived of sense or motion.

With frantic grief the youth hung over her; but long she remained not in this situation; once more unclosing her eyes, she mournfully proceeded—"Great indeed was my crime, but severe has been the punishment. Soon, very soon, shall I expiate my errors with my life; and when the grave has closed over me, wilt thou sometimes think with regret of her you once so fondly cherished?"

"Think of you! Oh, Bertha, death shall not divide us!—one tomb shall receive our remains; and together our freed spirits will wing their way to those bright regions where sin and sorrow find no entrance."

Impressed with the wild solemnity of his manner, she conjured him to banish such foreboding thoughts, and not suffer

suffer the loss of one so unworthy to throw a gloom over his future days.—"If time had been permitted me, fain would I have pressed your aged parent to my repentant bosom, and interceded for her pardon for the wrongs I have inflicted on her son; but it cannot be. Bear to her, therefore, my grateful acknowledgments for her unwearied kindness; for, on recalling the visions of my disordered fancy, her venerable form stands forward the most distinct and prominent object in the picture."

Mr. Glen soon became convinced that her recollection of past events was extremely confused and imperfect; he therefore merely replied that his mother's health permitted her not to travel; but he hoped, when her own was somewhat recruited, to be able to conduct her to that excellent parent, whose arms would open to receive her.

Bertha shook her head with an incredulous smile; and being exhausted with

with the exertion she had made, sunk into a disturbed dose.

In silent sorrow he continued to view that countenance which, since the first dawnings of reason, had been associated in his mind with every thing delightful.

CHAP.

CHAPTER XI.

But blythest laugh'd that cheek and eye
When Rokeby's little maid was nigh.

— — — — — —

Primrose he twin'd with daisy fair,
To form a chaplet for her hair.
By lawn, by grove, by brooklet's strand,
The children still were hand in hand.

WALTER SCOTT.

.....

This record will for ever stand—
Woman, thy vows are trac'd in sand. BYRON.

WHEN the infant Bertha could scarce lisp out her words, Glen selected her from among her youthful companions—

"—— —— —— an' led her by the hand,
Att to the tansy-know, or rashy strand,
She smiling by his side—he took delight
To pu' the rashes green, wi' roots sae white;
Wi' which, as weel as his young fancy could,
For her he plet the flow'ry belt and snood."

As

As they approached adolescence, his attentive tenderness was exerted in endeavouring to sow in her mind the seeds of knowledge and virtue; and well was he rewarded for his pains, by the glow of rapture which mantled on her cheeks, and the smile of affection which never failed to welcome him to the humble dwelling of her father.

It was so arranged, that at seventeen William Glen was to proceed to Edinburgh, in order to commence his academical studies; and not until this period approached, was he fully aware how dear to his heart was the companion of his infancy. Bertha, on her part, was not more tranquil; her pale cheeks and tearful eyes proclaimed her mental sufferings.

On the evening before his departure he proceeded to take leave of her and her father. The road from the manse to the village where Mr. Campbell's house

house stood, lay through a deep glen. Here he encountered the object of his thoughts; and before they reached the termination of their walk, the hopes and fears of the youthful pair were made known to each other.

The reverend Mr. Glen made no opposition to the choice of his son, and none was offered on the part of Campbell. But when his revered mother beheld her darling William depart for Edinburgh, she rejoiced that years must intervene before he received the hand of his destined bride; for, quick-sighted in all that regarded the happiness of this, her last and only hope, she had discovered that vanity and a love of admiration were Bertha Campbell's besetting sins.

Sedulously, therefore, did this excellent woman endeavour to eradicate those foul weeds which threatened to overrun a mind in other respects richly endowed,

dowed, and highly susceptible of cultivation; and she flattered herself that she had, in part, at least, succeeded.

One evening, however, about six months after the departure of her son, Mr. Campbell called at the manse, with the professed intention of escorting his daughter home, when he learned, with the utmost horror and astonishment, that she had not visited her friends for the last three days.

"My child! my child!" cried the distracted old man; "what then has become of my child?"

The worthy inhabitants of the manse had no consolation to offer to the frantic parent, who informed them, that on the morning of the preceding day, she had set out to pay them a visit, saying she would not return home that night.

Her sudden disappearance baffled all conjecture; but Mr. and Mrs. Glen accompanied the bewildered old man to the village, in order to make every in-

quiry likely to throw any light on her mysterious disappearance. But vain was every attempt to obtain tidings of the fugitive; no one had seen her, nor had any stranger been observed in the neighbourhood.

Sir Simon Frazer had been at the Castle for nearly a fortnight; and Mrs. Glen suspected that he would be found, somehow or other, connected with Bertha's elopement. Carefully, however, she concealed this idea in her own breast, and only advised that the inquiry should be extended to the servants of the Castle.

Leaving her with the disconsolate father, Mr. Glen proceeded to Castle Frazer, and was immediately ushered into the presence of the young heir.

With that haughty condescension which the great man often assumes to those whom, in the pride of his heart, he deems his inferiors, sir Simon rose to receive the worthy divine. With well-affected astonishment he listened to his tale,

tale, and immediately ordered inquiry to be made amongst his household respecting the disappearance of his steward's daughter, but without obtaining the smallest information.

Coffee was ordered in; and after some commonplace conversation, sir Simon, as if suddenly recollecting himself, observed—"I think Campbell told me, Mr. Glen, that his daughter was affianced to your son; but that the union had been delayed till he was ordained. Now may not the young people, spurning at what they deemed a hard restriction, have anticipated the appointed period of their happiness?"

The good old pastor had too firm a reliance on the principles of his son to concur in this suggestion; yet, like the drowning wretch, who catches at a straw, he would fain, against his better judgment, have persuaded himself into the belief that it was not wholly impossible.

Very different was the opinion of his

helpmate, when he reported, on his return, the result of his interview with the baronet. She knew the heart she had formed, and knew that William Glen was incapable of every species of duplicity; yet, as the poor distracted father of Bertha clung to the idea as a refuge from despair, she attempted not to tear from him this last hope.

Months wore away without bringing tidings of Bertha. William Glen received, with inexpressible agony, the news of her mysterious disappearance; and but for the conclusion of his mother's letter, in which she hinted at the probability of the unhappy girl having been decoyed to Edinburgh, he would instantly have relinquished his studies and set out for Argyleshire.

As it was, study and amusement became equally irksome to him. Whole days would he wander about the environs of that romantic city, reckless of hunger and fatigue; and when at night,

weary

weary and harassed, he threw himself on bed, sleep fled from his pillow, or at least was so disturbed with visions of horrid import, that he arose languid and unrefreshed.

Long he resisted the agonizing idea that Bertha had proved false to her promises; but when at the termination of eight months her fate still continued shrouded in mystery, he could no longer resist the conviction that she had been a willing agent in her own ruin.

The hopes in his father's letters, that by his learning and piety he would prove an ornament to the church, and the prop of his declining years, the gentle soothings of his excellent mother, and the ambition for literary distinction which she endeavoured to awaken in his mind, occasionally roused him from the apathy into which he had habitually sunk; but the image of his lost love mingled in all his employments, and even at the altar intervened between him and his God.

About this period, as he was returning from a solitary ramble, a carriage drove rapidly past him; and in the female form within he recognized the lost Bertha.

All his exertions were unequal to keep the vehicle in sight; and wearied and exhausted with fatigue, he was slowly pursuing his way to his lodgings, when he beheld the same carriage standing at a door in George's-square. His first impulse was to rush into the house, and upbraid the unhappy woman with her perfidy; but as he approached the door, gentler thoughts took possession of his mind. He, however, entered the house, and without knowing how, found himself in the presence of the object of his earliest and most devoted attachment.

To her he appeared like the spectre of happier days; and covering her face with her hands, she shrieked aloud.

"It was not thus we used to meet," the agitated youth with difficulty articulated;

lated; "but fear not, Bertha; I come not to upbraid you. But oh! for your own sake, for the sake of an aged parent, whose grey hairs your desertion is bringing with sorrow to the grave, return to the path from which you have unfortunately strayed!"

"Never," she passionately exclaimed, "never shall I willingly consent to become a mark for the finger of scorn to point at! never will I again behold my native glen, or the face of an injured father! Leave me, sir," she exclaimed, in passionate accents, "leave me to my fate! By what right do you intrude into my dwelling?" and starting up, the hapless woman paced the chamber with frantic gestures.

Poor Glen followed her with his eyes, and perceived, with dismay, that she would shortly become a mother. The blood rushed to his cheeks, and again receding, left them pale as ashes.

"You are right, poor lost one!" he

said; "your shame must not be the sport of the witless or the malicious: but leave, oh leave the base seducer of your innocence! I will provide for you a safe asylum, less splendid, it is true, than your present abode, but one in which you may, in time, regain your lost peace."

Tenderness struggled with pride in the bosom of the lost fair, till the conflict became too agonizing to support; and rushing from the apartment, she shut herself up in her own chamber.

In vain Glen sued for admittance; the only answer he received was a reiterated command to depart. Reluctantly he obeyed the ungracious mandate; and retiring to his lodgings, endeavoured to calm the tumult of his thoughts, and fix upon the most proper plan to be pursued in the melancholy affair.

On the evening of this eventful day, Mr. Glen formed the resolution of waiting

ing upon sir Simon Frazer, and stating to him the condition in which he had discovered the daughter of his aged steward, little suspecting that to his arts she owed all her misfortunes.

On knocking at the superb dwelling of lord William Frazer, the uncle of the baronet, in the New Town, a domestic informed him that sir Simon was from home; but as he turned from the threshold, a carriage drove up to the door, containing the master of the mansion and his niece, Helen Frazer.

The amiable girl immediately recognised the son of the venerable pastor of Frazer Town, and beckoning him to approach, introduced him to her uncle.

With unaffected hospitality, lord William invited him to enter—a request with which he cheerfully complied, feeling, that to the compassionate ear of Miss Frazer, he could more readily confide the tale of Bertha's wrongs than to her haughty and supercilious brother.

The interest the recital excited in the bosom of his auditors was so great, that Helen proposed, on the following morning, to seek the unhappy Bertha, and endeavour to prevail on her to relinquish her present course of life; but her benevolent intentions were completely frustrated by the object of her solicitude having withdrawn from her former lodgings.

All the information Miss Frazer and her uncle could obtain from the landlady was, that Mr. Campbell, the husband of the lady, had, on the evening before, returned from a journey; that high words passed between him and his wife; and that about half an hour after he had again left the house, the lady herself departed in a hackney-coach, and had not yet returned.

As the landlady was a widow of respectability, and wholly unacquainted with the real character of her late lodgers, lord William Frazer entrusted her with

as

as much of the history of Bertha as to induce her to assist him in discovering her retreat.

The description she gave of the supposed Mr. Campbell, almost convinced both uncle and niece that he and sir Simon Frazer were one and the same individual; but delicacy for each other's feelings restrained them from giving utterance to their surmises.

Disappointed in their benevolent intentions, they could only regret the fall of youth and innocence; but this regret was augmented in the bosom of each, by the reflection that one so near and dear to their hearts had been the agent of this fall.

Light, however, was their sorrow to the agony of the heart-stricken lover of Bertha, on being informed that this unhappy young woman had fled beyond his reach.

His studies were neglected, his time consumed, and his health impaired, in

wandering through the streets, in the hope that chance would once more become his friend.

From this useless pursuit, however, he was soon recalled by a letter from his mother, entreating his instant return, as his father lay ill of a fever, with feeble hopes of recovery. Every selfish wish gave way in the mind of that exemplary son before the ardent desire of once more embracing his revered parent; and, on the evening of the same day that he received the letter, he set off for the north.

His speed, however, was unavailing; for a very few hours before his arrival Mr. Glen had breathed his last.

Grief for the loss of a beloved father, and the exertion necessary to support the spirits of his remaining parent, drove from his mind, at least for a season, the image of the guilty Bertha.

The presentation was given by sir Simon Fraser to his former preceptor; and

and Mrs. Glen and her son retired to a small farm in the neighbourhood of Kinglass, which belonged to her father, who about three years before had paid the debt of nature.

But to return to the unfortunate Bertha. The visit of her injured lover had awakened in her mind the most agonizing feelings of shame, horror, and remorse. Love to sir Simon Frazer she could not plead in excuse for deserting her home and her lover, for she felt for him no individual preference. Twice had he met the youthful Bertha on his return to the Castle, after an absence of several years. During that period she had become a showy young woman; and the baronet, quick to observe the failings of others, was not slow in discovering that inordinate vanity was the ruling passion of her soul. Taking advantage of this foible, soon he enticed the thoughtless girl to put herself under his protection; and so secretly did he manage

nage

nage the affair, that she was far on her way to Edinburgh before her aged parent even suspected her flight.

His valet, the vile pander of his master's vices, was the companion of her journey, while sir Simon remained behind for some weeks, in order to divert suspicion from himself.

For a short time the unfortunate victim of his arts, intoxicated by flattery, and pleased with the show and glitter which surrounded her, forgot her bereaved parent and the friends of her infancy. But her dream of happiness quickly terminated; for soon was she left by her seducer to mourn in solitude over her credulity. The violence of her complainings, when he did appear, still farther estranged him from her lodgings; and at the period she was discovered by Glen, several weeks had elapsed since he had paid her a visit.

Thus left a prey to the most torturing reflections, pride, shame, and remorse,

by

by turns agitated her bosom. Her fixed resolve had, however, been to secrete herself from friend and relative, and in some obscure retreat linger out the remainder of her days.

This resolution was strengthened by the unexpected appearance of the being whose image, like the handwriting on the wall, had risen up to reproach her, even in the hours of sinful dalliance.

From the vile seducer of her innocence she had no opposition to expect to her plan; for he had of late not only treated her with neglect but insult.

The means, however, of the humblest subsistence were not even in her power; for sir Simon, parsimonious to an extreme, when the gratification of his passions was not concerned, had latterly left his unhappy victim for days, and even weeks, nearly destitute of the common necessaries of life.

In the splendid apartments in which he had placed her a few months before, where

where every luxury waited her acceptance, she of late frequently watered her dry crust with her tears. Pride restrained her from making her wants known to her landlady, or endeavouring to obtain credit; and when seen by her former lover, she had actually been disposing of some of the gaudy trappings of her guilt to procure the means of sustaining sinking nature.

CHAP.

CHAPTER XII.

——————— All-pitying Heaven,
Severe in mercy, chastening in its love,
Oftimes in dark and awful visitation
Doth interpose, and leads the wanderer back
To the straight path. Miss Baillie.

At the moment that the benevolence of Miss Frazer and her worthy uncle were devising means for rescuing Bertha Campbell from her present course of life, sir Simon entered the apartment of the unhappy girl. As before noticed, she had never felt the slightest spark of attachment to the baronet—now she regarded him with disgust, approaching to horror.

Throwing himself into the first vacant chair, without the slightest preface or apology,

apology, he informed her, that he had a scheme to propose, which would effectually conceal her shame, and reunite her to her *old dad*, whom she regretted so much having left.

"Tom Speedwell, your travelling companion, is a likely youth; he loves you, and will immediately become your husband. The bantling, should it ever see the light, will pass for his, but, as well as yourself, shall be amply provided for. Your having run off with him can excite no surprise; and I think I have sufficient influence to reconcile your father to the match, which he must be made to believe took place immediately on your leaving the north."

Surprise, indignation, and horror, kept the unhappy Bertha silent during this harangue. When the baronet had ceased speaking, she pressed her hand on her burning forehead, as if to recollect the purport of his speech.—"Wretch!"

she

she at length exclaimed; "detested monster! how dare you insult me by this infamous proposal?"

"Insult you! faith, that's a good one!" he replied, with a sneer. "Insult a wanton, who almost threw herself into my arms! But perhaps you would prefer the *Dominie*, who, I understand, is not deficient in his offers of *ghostly comfort*. If that is the case, the five hundred pounds I was to give to Tom shall be his. Tell him so at his next *visitation*; but tell him also, if he rejects this offer, and I again find that he intrudes into those apartments, my vengeance shall overtake and blast all his future prospects! Hark you, my girl, no more whining. I shall expect your answer in twenty-four hours. Here is something for present necessity," throwing a purse on the table, and with a demoniac laugh leaving the room.

Long after his receding footsteps fell on her ear, the victim of his baseness remained

mained rooted to her seat. Conscience upbraided her with the emptiness of that pleasure which she had purchased at the expence of her father's peace and the happiness of her lover; the temptation which had allured her to her ruin appeared gay and inviting in its approach, but a retrospective glance discovered it to be lifeless and hollow.

She had already resolved to dissever the guilty connexion; mortified vanity and insulted pride now gave added force to this resolution; and starting up, she prepared to put it into immediate execution.

On examining the purse, she found it contained five guineas; this, with a like sum which she had the evening before obtained for a few trinkets, was the whole of her worldly possessions.

Her expected confinement was not far distant; but had this not even been the case, she had never been accustomed to labour, yet poverty, and even death itself,

itself, were, in her eyes, preferable to again encountering the brutality of her undoer, or the mild sorrowing looks of the much-injured William Glen.

Throwing aside the gaudy habiliments of her shame, she arrayed herself in the sober cottage stuff she wore on leaving her home; and having put the remaining part of her wardrobe and a few ornaments into a small trunk, she sent the servant for a coach, and took her last farewell of the abode of her sorrow and of her shame.

An old Highland dame, who had acted as her washerwoman, lived in an obscure lodging in the outskirts of the city, and thither she directed the coachman to drive. Fortunately she found Mabel at home, who was equally surprised and delighted at the honour done her by Mrs. Campbell entering her humble dwelling. A tear of compassion, however, fell down her rugged cheek when

when Bertha, in a few words, rendered almost inarticulate by agitation, entreated her assistance to procure a lodging, as a difference with Mr. Campbell had determined her to leave him.

"Alack-a-day!" said the good woman, "I am afraid there's nothing hereabouts would suit such a grand lady as you; and it is so late."

"True," said Bertha; "I had forgot; but perhaps you will share your bed with me to-night, and to-morrow something may be found; but it must be humble indeed, to suit my fallen fortunes."

Old Mabel lifted her hands and eyes to heaven — "Share it with you! ay, with right good will; and I wish it were ten times better, for your sake! But you are trembling like an aspen leaf; let me get you a cup of warm tea."

Bertha was thankful for the considerate offer; and putting half-a-guinea into Mabel's

Mabel's hand, bade her prepare it as soon as possible, as she really felt ill and fatigued.

Seated in an old-fashioned arm-chair, which the good dame placed close to a blazing fire, she partook of the grateful beverage with a feeling of satisfaction she had not experienced for many months, and which was truly surprising to herself. But she had taken one retrogade step in the career of vice, and amid all her causes of sorrow, her heart seemed lightened of half its load.

In an inner apartment stood the bed of honest Mabel; and in this clean, though humble pallet, the unhappy Bertha enjoyed a few hours repose.

When she awoke on the following morning, the transactions of the two last days appeared like a frightful dream. She rubbed her eyes; she gazed around the bare walls of her humble chamber; she listened to Mabel, plying at the washing-

washing-tub in the outer apartment, and her desolate situation rushed on her mind with agonizing force. Then followed the reflection, that to her own inordinate vanity must be ascribed that desolation; and again resting her head on the pillow, she shed bitter tears of self-condemnation.

That she had seen William Glen for the last time, was the bitterest drop in her cup of sorrow; and she almost repented, that in the pride of her heart she had spurned the consolation he offered. Yet, to behold the countenance of that much-injured youth, to blast his fair fame by suffering him to hold converse with one so fallen, was an idea that more than reconciled her to the step she had taken.

On hearing her stir, the old woman entered the apartment. Bertha held out her hand to thank her for her kindness, when Mabel exclaimed—"You are ill, my

my dear young lady—your hand is burning like a hot coal. Pray try to remain in bed, and I will prepare you a bason of tea."

Grateful for the attentive kindness of her humble hostess, Bertha endeavoured to compose her agitated spirits, but in vain; she even loathed her favourite beverage, and was unable to raise her aching head from her pillow.

On finding the rapid approach of disease, she put her little stock of money into the hands of Mabel, and begged that she would suffer her to continue her inmate.

The old woman willingly granted her request; and having procured a few articles to render the chamber somewhat more comfortable, she lighted a fire, and again entreated the poor sufferer to try and sleep.

To comply with this advice the patient found impossible: restless and uncomfortable, she tossed to and fro on her

couch, and before midnight was raving in all the delirium of fever.

The medical gentleman whose aid Mabel requested was humane and attentive, and by the means employed, the violence of the disease was quickly subdued; but the invalid was so much reduced, that he looked forward to the approaching period of her confinement as the termination of her life.

In this, however, he was disappointed, for in less than a month from his first attendance, the unfortunate Bertha gave birth to a female infant, and, contrary to all expectation, gradually recovered her health.

Her melancholy, however, daily increased; for hours would she sit and weep over the unconscious babe, till her aged landlady began to think that her reason was disordered.

In all her own sorrows Mabel had found support and consolation from the advice of her worthy pastor, Mr. M'Chonochie, and

and to him she now related the case of her unhappy lodger, as far as she was herself acquainted with it.

The reverend gentleman, ever anxious to do all in his power to alleviate the sufferings of his fellow-creatures, accompanied the old woman to her dwelling.

At first his presence seemed to be unnoticed by the invalid; but in a short time, the kindness and gentleness of his manners, and the soothing tones of his voice, won upon her regard. By degrees Bertha made him the confidant of her sad story, only resolutely persisting in withholding her own name and that of her seducer.

Three months had she now been the inmate of old Mabel's dwelling: the infant Bertha was at times caressed by her with all the fervour of maternal affection, while at others she would throw her from her bosom, and curse her as a living witness of her shame.

Her little stock of money was carefully hoarded by her aged hostess; still

the necessary expences attendant on her confinement had sensibly diminished it, and the poor old woman began to fear that want would soon be added to the other sufferings of her unhappy guest.

The idea of seeing her and the infant become the inmates of a workhouse gave a sore heart, to use her own expression, to the worthy Mabel, who loved them as her own offspring; yet, with all her industry, she could barely maintain herself.

From these forebodings she was, however, happily relieved by an accident which occurred one morning, as Bertha was fondling her child in the outer apartment.

A youth who employed Mabel as his laundress, called and entreated she would find some person to convert the piece of linen he held in his hand into shirts as soon as possible—a request with which she readily complied.

No sooner was he gone, than her guest,

guest, placing Bertha in her arms, unfolded the cloth, and having in silence cut out part of it exactly to the pattern, she proceeded to work with a neatness and speed old Mabel had never seen equalled.

When the whole was finished, Mabel placed the money in her hand, which she returned with a smile, saying—"Procure me more work, and we may continue to live with you."

From this period a degree of serenity pervaded the countenance of Bertha, to which she had long been a stranger; but the worthy pastor, who occasionally visited her, began to fear that such constant sedentary employment would undermine her feeble constitution.

No persuasions, however, could prevail on her to stir abroad during the day: at night she would sometimes stroll a short way from the house; but if she encountered a human being, she always returned in great trepidation.

Mr. M'Chonochie was one evening more urgent than usual that Bertha would no longer absent herself from divine ordinances; and so persuasive were his entreaties, that with a shuddering sensation of horror she bowed her assent.

On the following Sunday, covered with a thick veil, she took her seat in a dark corner of the kirk, among some of the poorer parishioners.

The text selected by the good divine was in a peculiar manner applicable to her situation.—"I will arise and go to my father, and say unto him, I have sinned against Heaven and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son; but receive me as one of thy hired servants."

With touching eloquence the pious man urged the necessity of repentance; but that repentance which led to amendment was alone acceptable in the eye of Heaven. Not only must every criminal interest or pleasure be foregone, but the

the secret and besetting sin of the soul relinquished — the offending member must be lopped off—the right eye or the right hand must not be spared; the offering, to be acceptable, must, if necessary, even be purified by fire.

In the application of his discourse, after pointing out many examples of pride, passion, and prejudice, of which genuine repentance demanded the sacrifice, he proceeded—"If there be among you any disobedient children, arise instantly, and go to your parents. Let not anger, nor pride, nor shame, prevent the confession of your crimes. They are the right eye and the right hand which must be sacrificed. Let not the dread of the reception you may meet with deter you from the performance of a commanded duty; for remember, that should even an earthly parent reject your submission, should he refuse to kill the fatted calf, your Heavenly Father hath said—'That there is more joy in hea-

ven over one sinner that repenteth, than over ninety-and-nine just men who needeth no repentance."

Tears fell fast from the eyes of Bertha, as she listened to the lessons of wisdom which fell from the lips of the reverend pastor.

During the remainder of the evening she sat absorbed in thought; and no sooner had she risen the next morning, than she entreated Mabel to request the presence of Mr. M'Chonochie when he should be at leisure.

When he entered her humble habitation, Bertha arose, and taking his hand, said—"You have prevailed, my dear sir; this stubborn heart must yield to its duty—I will go and seek the aged author of my being; if he reject my petition, and spurn me from his arms, I will turn to him who has promised that 'he will not bruise the broken reed."

The good man pressed her hand in his, and with a benevolent smile replied—"Do

—" Do so, my suffering child; but should an offended father turn a deaf ear to your cry, remember you have a friend in me, and that the door of this humble habitation will again open to receive the disappointed wanderer."

Bertha had now no reserves from Mr. M'Chonochie, and through his recommendation to a jeweller of probity, she disposed of her remaining ornaments for a sum sufficient not only to defray the expences of her journey, but amply to remunerate the worthy Mabel for the unwearied attention she had paid to her and her infant.

On the evening before her departure, she dedicated that infant to Heaven, giving her the name of Bertha. Mr. M'Chonochie performed the ceremony of baptism in the humble apartment of Mabel. No smile of pleasure irradiated the eye of the unhappy mother; no maternal kiss was imprinted on the downy cheek of the luckless babe. Her admis-

sion into the pale of the Christian church was consecrated by the bitter tears of agony and remorse.

The following morning Bertha proceeded with her infant, and accompanied by Mabel, to the coach that was to carry her to the north. In silence she wrung the hand of her aged friend at parting, who sobbed out—"If things should go cross at home, my dear young lady, remember to return to old Mabel."

She had time for no more; the coachman mounted the box, smacked his whip, and Bertha was whirled from her sight in a moment.

The next month is a blank in the life of this ill-fated young woman.

CHAP-

CHAPTER XIII.

——— She hath ta'en farewell—
The last long lingering is given;
The shuddering start, the inward groan,
And the pilgrim on her way is gone.

JOHN WILSON.

.....

Le crespe chiome d'or puro lucente,
E'l lampeggiar dell' angelico riso,
Che soleàn far in terra Paradiso,
Poca polvere son, che nulla sente;
Ed io pur vivo. PETRARCA.

From the period that William Glen and his widowed mother retired to their new habitation, this unfortunate youth appeared to yield more and more to the melancholy languor which totally unfitted him for mental exertion.

Mrs. Glen possessed a strong mind and great decision of character. She at once saw the futility of reasoning with

her son on the subject of his blasted hopes. To engage him in some active pursuit, which would renovate his shattered frame, and introduce a new train of associations into his mind, appeared to her the best means of withdrawing his thoughts from his recent disappointment.

Instead, therefore, of urging him to renew his academical studies, she contented herself, for the present, with engaging him in arranging his late father's concerns, and superintending the operations of their little farm.

One evening, on returning home from Frazer Town, his mind reverted to the image of her who was seldom absent from his thoughts, when he was suddenly awakened from his reverie by the starting of his horse. At the same moment his ears were assailed by a feeble wailing, which appeared to issue from a clump of stunted trees to the right.

Glen immediately leaped from his horse;

horse; but all was again still.—"My fancy could not deceive me," thought he, as, tying his horse to one of the trees, he entered the wood.

For some time his search was vain; and he was about to return when the same low moaning again struck on his ear. Directed by the sound, he proceeded to the extremity of the little wood, and beheld a woman, apparently lifeless, stretched at the foot of a blasted oak. He raised her from the ground, and beheld the form of his still-adored Bertha, with an infant in her arms.

While he gazed on the dying figure before him, the bitter tears of anguish burst from his eyes. For a few moments his faculties seemed paralysed; but the urgent necessity of procuring shelter for the helpless wanderer quickly roused him to exertion.

His own habitation was at too great a distance, and he vainly looked around for

for any other; not even the meanest hovel met his eager gaze.

His delicacy recoiled from exposing her to the gossip of the village; yet he thought it might be possible to convey her to the house of her father, without, in the first instance, agitating him by a too sudden knowledge of her return, as Mr. Campbell was now, for the most part, confined to his bed. At any rate, no other alternative was left him, but to do this or behold the unfortunate Bertha perish before his eyes.

In pursuance of this determination, he carefully lifted the exhausted wanderer from the ground; and having placed her on his horse, supported her with one arm, while with the other he slowly led the animal towards the village.

With a shuddering sensation of horror he perceived the infant had been lifeless for some time; but he endeavoured

ed not to wrest it from the hold of the wretched mother, who, with a dying grasp, held it fast locked in her arms.

In this manner he proceeded to the back-door of Mr. Campbell's house; and having placed his insensible charge on the ground, he entered the kitchen, and in a few words informed old Esther of the manner in which he had discovered her young mistress.

The old woman's surprise and joy were so great, that Glen could scarcely prevent her from arousing her master; but when she beheld the pallid cheeks and wasted form of her young favourite, her rejoicing turned into lamentation; and it was with the greatest difficulty that he could restrain her sorrow within the bounds of moderation.

At length, by his direction, the exhausted sufferer was placed in bed, and some warm wine and water poured down her throat. The remains of the ill-fated babe were decently disposed off; and

Glen

Glen took his seat by the couch of the unconscious mother.

In the silence and stillness of night, which was only broken by the low breathing of the patient, Glen endeavoured to collect his bewildered ideas, and fix upon some mode of communicating her return to the heart-broken parent. Day, however, dawned, and still found him irresolute. Whatever precautions were employed, still the old man's ears must be wounded by the tale of his darling's disgrace; and Glen shrunk from inflicting the blow.

Nine o'clock, the usual breakfast-hour came, and the season for deliberation was past. On entering Mr. Campbell's chamber, he expressed his surprise at the reappearance of his favourite, who the night before had pertinaciously refused to remain under his roof.

"Fortunately I did so, my dear friend," he replied, "as it has enabled me to bring you tidings of our fugitive."

Mr.

Mr. Campbell waited to hear no more; he gave a cry of joy; and seizing the hand of Glen, entreated to be instantly conveyed to his child.

With cautious delicacy the whole truth was at length unfolded to his view; for some time he appeared nearly bereft of reason, till a salutary flow of tears came to his relief. After an internal struggle of a few moments, he articulated in a low voice—"Lead me to my lost abandoned child. I will not curse her!"

"Curse her! No," rejoined the equally-agitated youth, "God forbid! Let it rather be our task to soothe the repentant wanderer to peace; for repentant she must have been ere she resolved to return to your dwelling."

Glen now supported the enfeebled old man to the chamber of his guilty daughter, who still remained in a deep and disturbed slumber.

In an agony of mind, impossible to portray,

portray, he hung over the altered form of his late blooming darling. His eyes and hands were lifted up, as if in prayer, but no sound escaped from his parched lips. He appeared rooted, spell-bound to the spot, till Glen, gently laying hold of his arm, entreated him, in a whisper, to withdraw from the chamber, lest his presence should, when she awoke, produce an agitation too powerful for the enfeebled patient to support.

This considerate precaution proved, however, unnecessary, since, for two whole days, the invalid scarcely opened her eyes, and gave no other indications of existence than what proceeded from her low and constrained breathing.

In the mean time the remains of the babe were decently interred; and Glen dispatched a messenger for his mother. He also summoned the most able medical advice which that part of the country afforded.

Vainly, however, they essayed their skill;

skill; the bodily strength of Bertha was gradually restored, but her mind remained a complete blank.

For the few weeks that the heart-broken father lingered on this side the grave, Mrs. Glen and her son never left the cottage. With his latest breath he thanked her for her unwearied kindness, called down blessings on the head of her son, recommended his guilty and unfortunate child to their joint care, and resigned his being without a groan.

Glen immediately caused seals to be placed on the different repositories, and wrote to Edinburgh, to inform sir Simon Frazer of the death of his steward.

The return of post brought an order to Mr. Bruce, appointing him steward, with full powers to inspect the accounts of the deceased.

With indecent haste he proceeded on this business. By a will made several years before, Mr. Campbell's property was left solely to his daughter, to whom the

the late sir William Frazer was, by his own permission, appointed sole guardian.

In a codicil, added to this will since the return of Bertha, he entreated sir Simon to assume the office of guardian, in the room of his honoured father, giving, however, the charge of Bertha's person to Mrs. Glen, with such a salary as should be agreed upon. He also constituted William Glen residuary legatee of his whole property.

Scarcely had the grave closed over the remains of Mr. Campbell, ere Bruce indicated a wish to Mrs. Glen, that she would remove, with *Mad Bess*, as he brutally termed the unhappy daughter of the worthy old man, to whose unwearied instructions he was beholden for those talents that fitted him to become his successor, since the interest of the baronet required that he should immediately take possession of the house, and commence the exercise of his functions.

With

With dignified composure Mrs. Glen replied—"That in common humanity she was bound not to desert her unhappy charge; neither could she, with a proper regard to delicacy, remove her from underneath the roof of her guardian till she received instructions from him to that effect. She would, however, in the mean time, confine herself to the chamber of the invalid, so as not in the least to interfere with the business of the steward."

At the earnest entreaties of a mother, whose will had ever been to him a law, William Glen consented to return to Edinburgh, and resume his studies. Indeed it was on that condition alone that this prudent woman consented to accept the trust delegated to her by Mr. Campbell, and receive into her family the guilty and unfortunate Bertha.

Charged with a copy of the will, and a letter from Mrs. Glen to sir Simon Frazer, explanatory of her intentions, her

her son once more set out for the metropolis of Scotland.

The reception he met with from the baronet was at first extremely equivocal; but when, by a few artful questions, he drew from the ingenuous youth a detail of all the circumstances connected with the return of Bertha, and learned that she was a confirmed maniac, his manners instantly changed.

Smoothing his haughty and stern brow, he entered, with that apparent frankness he so well knew how to assume, into the contents of Mrs. Glen's letter. He praised her humanity in accepting so troublesome a task as the charge of this maniac, he was afraid, would prove; and proposed, in the first instance, to allow fifty pounds annually for her board, until the state of Mr. Campbell's affairs was fully ascertained.

"To your inspection, Mr. Glen," he continued, "as the party most interested, all these accounts shall be submitted; and

and I will give you a letter to Bruce to that effect, as I believe it will be some time before I shall myself return to the north."

William Glen informed sir Simon that he was at present attending the classes.—"But at any rate," he added, "a sense of propriety and delicacy must have prevented me in any way interfering with the trust you have condescended to assume."

A smile of contempt curled the upper lip of the crafty baronet at the confiding simplicity of his visitor, even at the very moment he extended to him the hand of good fellowship, as the youth arose to take leave.

Notwithstanding the studied condescension of sir Simon, there was a something in his manner repellent to the feelings of our student; but in the melancholy retrospection of the last few months he soon forgot that such a being existed.

From the mental lassitude and inaction

tion in which he had of late indulged, he was shortly after this period awakened by a letter from his mother. She informed him that she had returned to her home with her unhappy charge, and conjured him not to suffer one disappointment to cloud the fair prospect of his future days. Aware, however, that in cases of mental malady, reasoning, instead of proving salutary, frequently augments the evil it was intended to correct, she went on to inform him, that the son of their pastor was to set out for Edinburgh on the following week, in order to attend the medical classes.

"His father is anxious," she continued, "that he should share your apartment, and also that you would afford him every assistance in his classical studies. Knowing the mind of my son, I have promised that he will exert his utmost efforts to aid the views of the oldest and most respected friend of his parents."

In less than a week the young student

was

was domesticated with William Glen; and, as his mother had foreseen, his company proved of the most essential benefit to the mind and health of her son, by forcing him to exertion, and distracting his thoughts from the contemplation of one gloomy and overpowering subject.

On his return to the north at the next spring vacation, Mrs. Glen rejoiced to behold her darling boy recovered, in a great measure, from the melancholy that oppressed him. The mirthful turn of his mind had indeed given place to a sedateness beyond his years, but he entered without effort into the business and pleasures of life. The pangs which he suffered on beholding the fallen object of his youthful affections were carefully confined to his own breast, nor suffered to interfere with the performance of any social or relative duty. He felt a melancholy pleasure in attending on the wanderings of the poor maniac; and it was during one of these discursive

rambles that they encountered the baronet and his lady, as already related.

"*Do you threaten, sir Simon?*" uttered by Glen in no very conciliating tone, cowed the proud spirit of the haughty baronet, who judged correctly, that the part he had in the fall of this unfortunate fair one had, by some means or other, become known to her protector.

His fears, for once, were correct; Mr. M'Chonochie, anxious for the safety of Bertha, had, after impatiently waiting for several weeks to hear of her safe arrival at home, written to Glen, to inquire after her safety; not judging it right in the first instance to address her father on a subject so painful. This letter was retransmitted by Mrs. Glen to her son, who instantly waited on Mr. M'Chonochie, and from him learned the full particulars of sir Simon Frazer's disgraceful conduct in the affair.

Such was the outline of Bertha Campbell's history, as related to her kind protectors

tectors by Mr. M'Intire, at the request of his young friend Glen, while he watched by the couch of the dying penitent.

The feelings of contempt with which captain Frazer had ever regarded his relative were now changed to abhorrence; and, but for the sake of his young and interesting wife, never would he have again associated with one so lost to all honourable feeling.

Of lapses committed in the exuberance of youthful passion, he was a lenient censor; but the deliberate seduction of an inexperienced girl, and that girl the only child of an old and faithful servant of a deceased parent, was a crime of so black a dye, as admitted, in his upright mind, of no extenuation. In proportion to his abhorrence of the baronet, was his compassion for the youthful lover of Bertha, whose fair prospects of domestic bliss had been thus withered and blasted in their early dawn.

His Emily largely partook in all his

feelings; and after thanking her reverend friend for the trouble he had taken in giving them the above narrative, she left the gentlemen together, and once more entered the sick chamber.

Long and heavy had been the sleep of the exhausted invalid; while poor Glen still continued to kneel by her couch, the silent image of despair.

Mrs. Frazer, gently laying her hand on his shoulder, motioned him to leave the room, and recalled old nurse to supply his place, and whom she enjoined to inform them the moment the patient awoke.

With the most delicate attentions captain Frazer sought to beguile the youthful lover of his sorrows. The house was too circumscribed to afford him a bed; but one was procured for him in the village, and he was entreated to take up his abode through the day at the cottage.

Every hour that prophecy warranted was spent by Glen in the chamber of the

the patient, who hourly became weaker. Her senses appeared perfect, but she never reverted to the period which intervened between her leaving the coach at Dunbarton and that in which she was discovered by her former lover; and a dread of disturbing her last moments precluded every mention of the subject.

One morning, about a week after his arrival at the Cottage, when he had sent nurse out of the room, and taken his usual station by the bedside, Bertha opened her eyes, and beheld those of Glen mournfully fixed on her face. The long tale of her credulity, and her ingratitude to this amiable youth, flashed across her mind in an instant, and nearly overpowered her enfeebled frame by the strong emotions to which these recollections gave birth.—"Ah, my father! Ah, William! you are avenged on me now!" she uttered in a low inward voice, and instantly expired.

The distracted young man gazed on the

the lifeless form of her he had so long and so tenderly loved with indescribable agony. Pale and fixed was now that countenance which he remembered bright with all the sportive graces of youth, innocence, and gaiety; silent was that voice to the melodious tones of which he had oft listened enraptured. Even the strong hold which religion had, from his earliest infancy, exerted over his mind, was scarcely sufficient to restrain him from imprecating curses on the head of her destroyer.

At length, gaining courage from despair, he summoned the attendant, and darted from the house. Long he wandered, unconscious of the lapse of time, till the shades of night began to gather around him, and veil all terrestrial objects in her own gloomy hue.

The errors of her he loved were now forgotten; she no longer appeared to his mental view the frail erring being she had in reality proved, but a lovely phantom, which his disordered fancy delighted

delighted to contemplate as a bright reality which had eluded his grasp, and left him in utter darkness and despair.

Exhausted by the intenseness of his feelings, he leaned against a tree for support, and in this situation was found by Carlo, who had been dispatched by his master to seek him at the village, where it was supposed he had gone on leaving the Cottage.

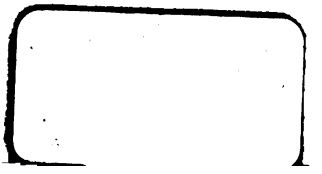
This interruption proved a salutary relief to his overcharged bosom, by compelling him to exert his fortitude, in order to meet the humane protectors of his lost love. In silence he followed Carlo to the Cottage. Here no studied form of condolence mocked his feelings; the silent pressure of the hand, the look of friendly commiseration, spoke to the heart of the disconsolate mourner, and robbed his grief of half its bitterness.

Captain Frazer next morning dispatched a letter to the Castle, informing sir Simon of the death of his ward, and requesting directions respecting the interment.

terment. He then briefly noticed the arrival of Mr. Glen, and his determination to remain till the last sad duties were paid to the companion of his infancy.

The baronet cursed the officiousness of the young divine; but, ignorant how far he might be acquainted with the share he himself had in Bertha's ruin, he repressed his rising ire, and simply replied to his kinsman's letter—"That, as illness prevented him from attending, he entreated Mr. Glen would take upon himself the whole direction of the funeral."

Words cannot describe the desolation of soul with which this sorrowing youth turned from the grave of his first and only love. The world appeared to him a solitary wilderness; and it was long before the soothings of friendship, and the anxious cares of maternal tenderness, could impart to his mind the hard lesson of resignation to his fate.

END OF VOL. I.

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